MARCH 1988

COMMODORE USER

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Nº1 For AMIGA GAMES

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IO-INCINERATED!
THE TRAIN-DERAILED!
GRYZOR-GUTTED!
FIREFLY-FRAZZLED!



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AMIGA: MERCENARY-ROADWARS-GOLDEN PATH



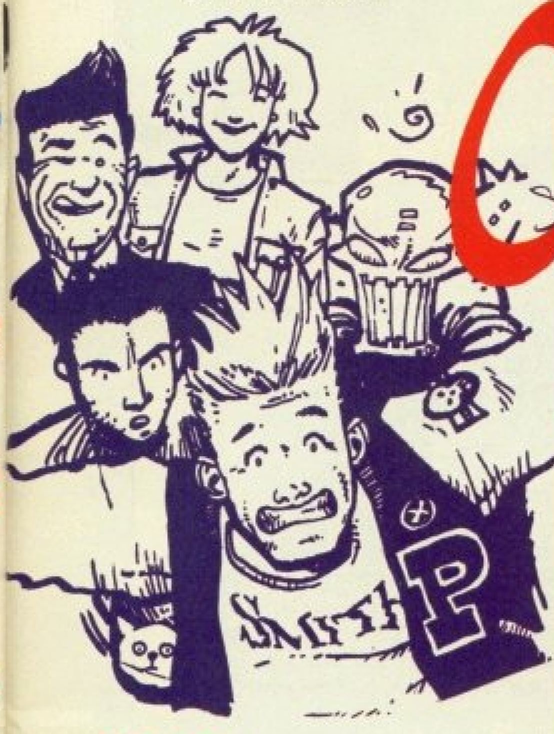
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WORLD GAMES
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Alternative
WORLD GAMES
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ZAPP 64
Fantastic
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CU Contents

Specials





R-Type — ace map





Golden Path: aesthetically fab



Thunderblade: Sega's chopper game wipes the rest out of the skies



IO: R-Type comes to the 64

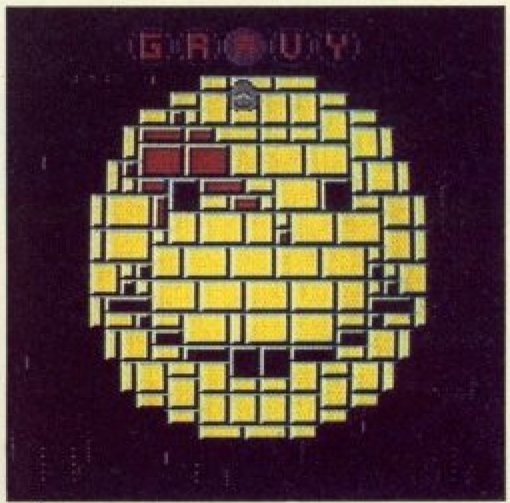
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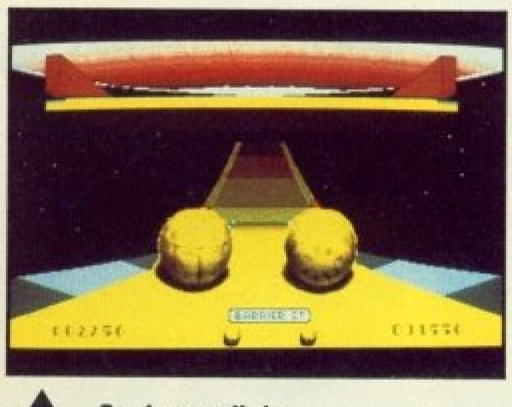
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Regulars

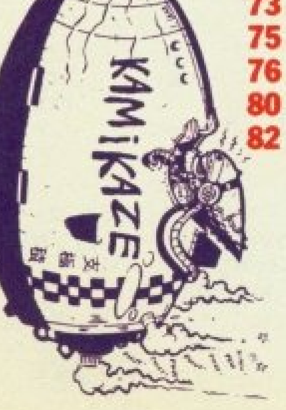
Screen Scene



Who watches the Watchmen? Ricochet the first cheapo BreakOut clone

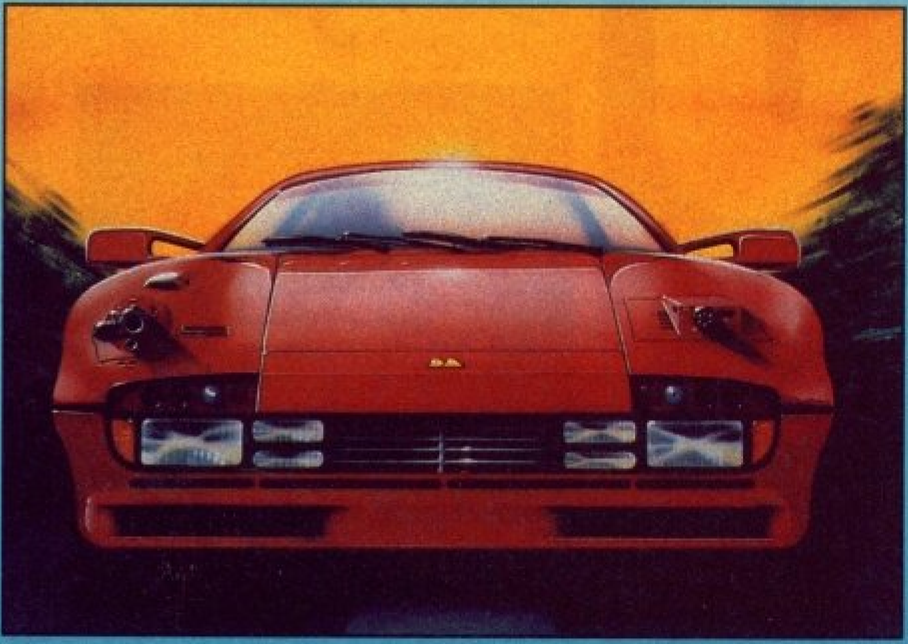


Roadwars rolls in



BUZZ





CARD SHARKS

So you think you can play cards, huh? How would you like to find yourself sitting around the old green beize table with such scheming poker-faces as Mikhael "Stoney" Gorbachev, Ronald "Quickdraw" Reagan and Margaret "Sleeves" Thatcher? Well, now you can, courtesy of Accolade/Electronic Art's *Card Sharks*. Choose between *Blackjack, Five Card Draw, Seven Card Stud, Texas Hold 'Em* and *Hearts*, then pick your opponents. If the thought of playing opposite one or all of the Big Three is too much for you, there are also three local sharks to play with. Each player you encounter has a different strategy, and they'll ask questions and give vent to their feelings when the game turns sour. You play for points or money, depending on which game is chosen. If you're sweatin' for a bettin', *Card Sharks*, release date imminent, looks like the game for you.

ROAD WARRIOR

In CRL's latest, *Road Warrior*, you get to drive a choice of cars, ranging from a Ferrari to a Volkswagen. But, as you might expect from the company who brought you the likes of *Dracula* and *Jack The Ripper*, we're not talking about a Sunday afternoon spin in the country. No, indeedy, there are a troop of Hell's Angels on the loose, and who better to dis the delinquents than a vigilante type like yourself. With an appropriately violent hip hop soundtrack, and a range of weapons, speeds and motors to choose from, your task is to clear the streets, and the levels without running out of fuel or scratching your paintwork. And we presume if someone rips off your VW plate, you lose a stack of points too. *Road Warrior* should be coming down your street any week now.



KARNOV



Now, y'all remember us telling you about a strange arcade game, name of *Karnov*, that we came across some months back in the arcades? The one with the fat little fire-breathing refugee from a Russian circus who has to bounce and breath his way through a mysterious land full of strange beasties? Well, Activision have recently signed up the rights to this charmingly weird game, and this month should see its release. Your mission, comrade flame features, is to recover the lost treasure of Babylon. You'll have to bounce, swim and fly your way past ostrich-mounted skeletons, gingernut-throwing statues, vultures and monsters masquerading as tearful Shirley Temples. Acquire flippers to swim, wings to fly and boots to leap even higher, exhale furiously and avoid the sultans and their bizarre allies and the loot can be yours.

INFILTRATOR II

Really! You'd think that being a world-class sprinter, aerospace engineer, military consultant, ace helicopter pilot, designer of latex undergarments and recent vanquisher of the Mad Leader, you'd have a right to expect the occasional break. But no rest for the wicked, as they say, and certainly none for Captain Johnny "Jimbo Baby" McGibbits, better known as The Infiltrator. It seems that, despite the thrashing you gave him in Chris Gray's original, The Mad Leader has managed to recover, regroup, and once again poses a threat to world peace and security. So it's into your Gizmo DHX-1 Attack Chopper and across the enemy lines once more to launch another attack on the loony fiend of death. You'll have to learn how to fly your helicopter, then embark on three ground missions, the final one being to locate ML himself and lodge a pacifying implant in his evil skull. *Infiltrator II*, programmed by US software house Mindscape and released over here by US Gold, is whirling its way towards you as we type.

THE THREE STOOGES

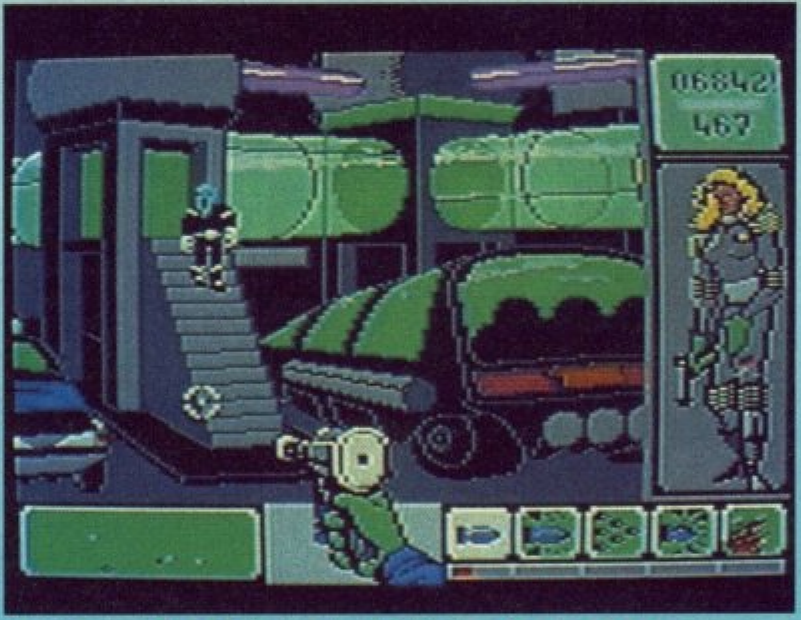
If you're into a dose of classic madcappery, this newie from American softsellers Cinemaware (distributed over here by Mirrorsoft) should be right up your alley. The Three Stooges, for those of you too young to remember, were a trio of amiable dopes named Moe, Larry and Curly, stars of the silver screen way back in the 'Thirties. Our three heroes come across an evil banker (*Yar! Boo! Sucks! — Ed*) who is about to evict an old lady and her three beautiful daughters (*Phwaughh!*) from their crumbling orphanage. Can the boys raise the dosh to prevent this tragedy? Their efforts lead them through a series of (very) odd jobs, which include prizefighting, tending the sick and, of course, custard pie throwing. With wunnerfool Amiga graphics enhancing its riotous charm, this barrel of laughs will be with y'all real soon.



TROLL

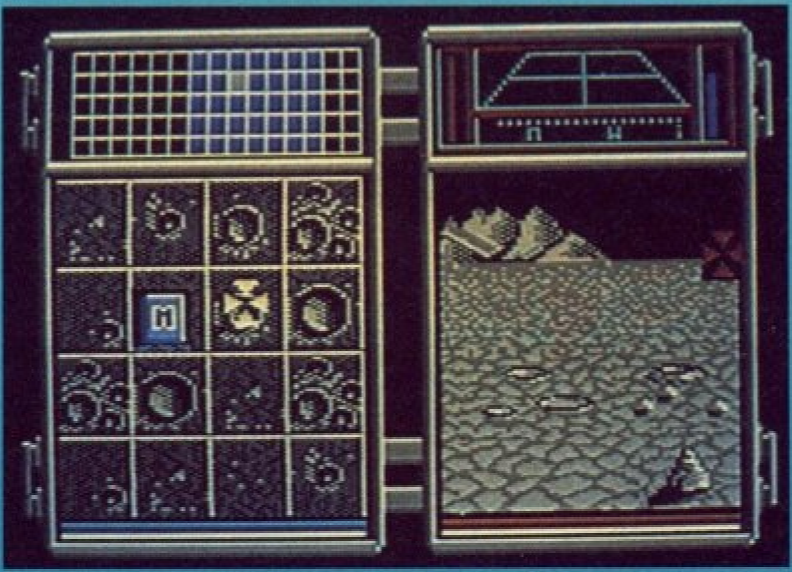
Outlaw Productions may be a young company, but the success of their fab first release, *Shoot-'em-up Construction Kit*, means that a lot of softfreaks will be keeping their eyes peeled for future Outlaw products. Well, here comes their second game, *Troll*, programmed by Denton Design and due for release in "early Spring" (*??? — frostbitten Ed*). You, a troll, are trapped in the nasty netherworld of Nart, beset by hordes of evil goblins whose only purpose in life seems to be to send you crashing through one of their inter-dimensional holes. You've got to avoid these creatures — by fighting them off or even, bizarrely, by somersaulting onto the ceiling and carrying on the battle upside down — and use your own supply of escape holes to jump into new locations in your desperate search for an escape route out of this horrible place. Oh, and one more thing: make sure you don't end up in THE PIT (well, that's what it says here . . .)





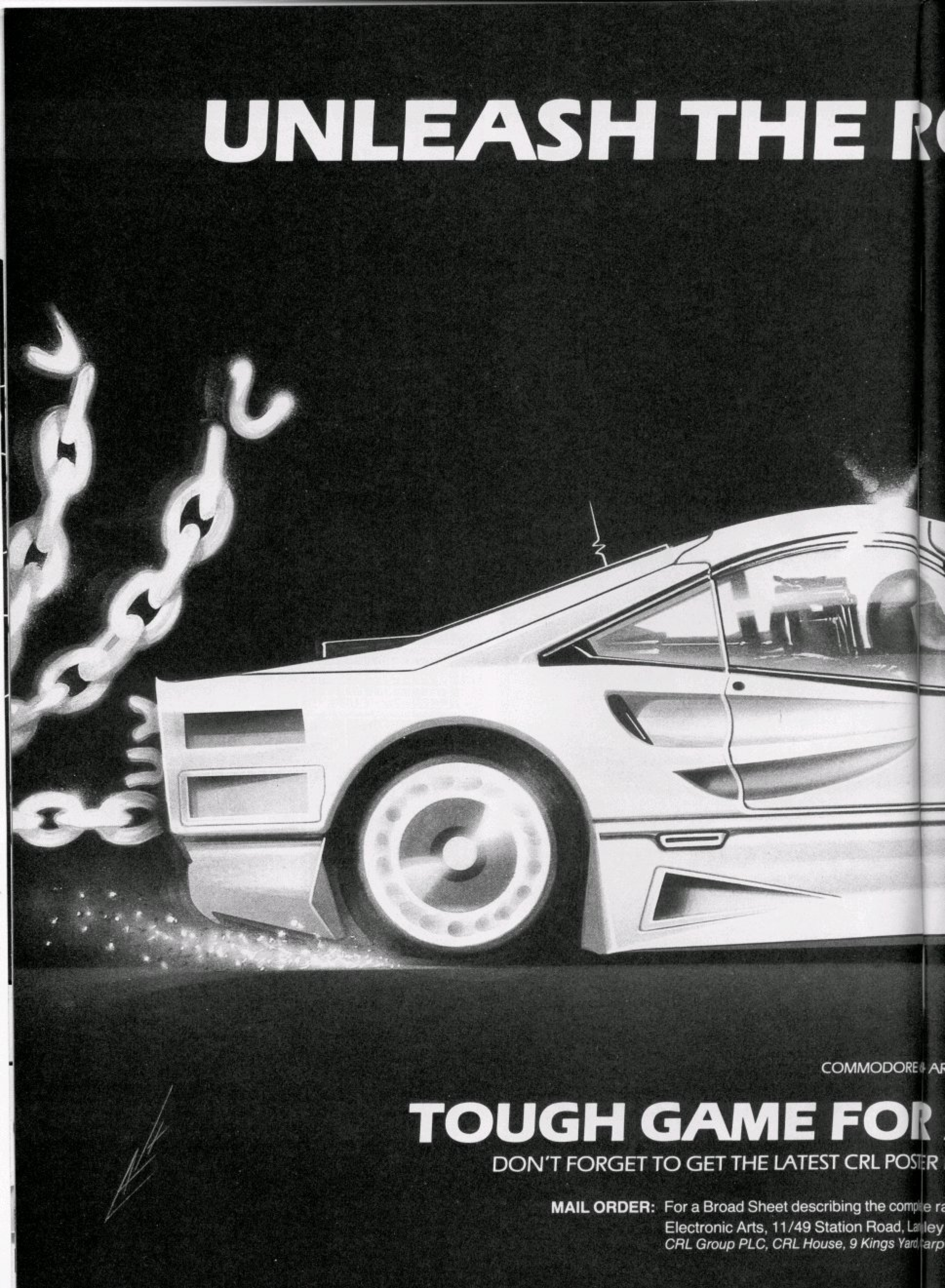
JUDGE DEATH

Programmed by Andromeda in Hungary for Piranha, and based on the *2000AD* strip, *Judge Death* should be with us within the next month or so. Judge Death and his three cronies, Fire, Mortis and Fear spend their days terrorising and bumping off hapless citizens of Mega City One. You play Judge Anderson, the voluptuous Psi Judge whose mission is to stop the Dark Judges in their tracks. Armed with a single shooter, you battle the four evil law enforcers through two sectors of Mega City and out on the mutant wastelands — hit them on their teleporter belts to get rid of them temporarily — before the final confrontation in Deadworld. You'll have to be pretty fast on the draw to get them before they hit you (each hit saps your energy drastically) but be sure you don't blow away too many innocent bystanders — even Judges have to obey some of the laws, some of the time.



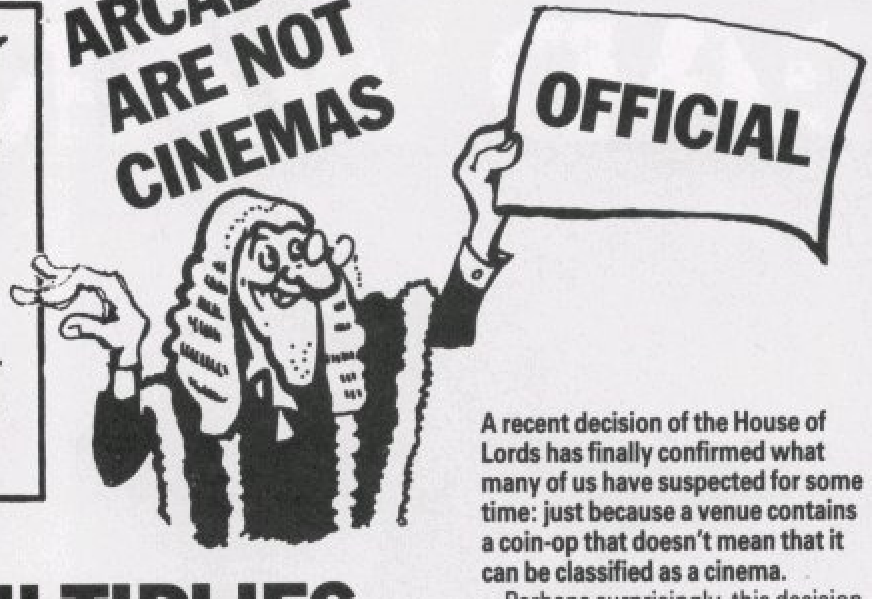
CORPORATION

Fans of conspiracy theories (you know, people who find demonic symbols on cigarette packets and think that the Government are putting happy pills in the water supply — people like us, in fact) will be delighted with Activision's *Corporation*, due out on the 64 this month. The game is set in the year 3026AD, and, just as you always suspected, the entire world is controlled by two Corporations. Nations have become irrelevant, all that really matters is your credit rating with your Corporation. You've got to work hard — if you're a failure, you'll be blacklisted and destitute. Your own job is that of commander of a deep space robotic mining team, digging up chunks of valuable Minorthian Crystal on a remote asteroid and keeping it out of the greedy mitts of the opposing corporation's labour-slaves. If you value your corporate position, you won't make any mistakes. And remember — just because you're paranoic it doesn't mean that they're *not* all out to get you.


UNLEASH THE R
COMMODORE
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CRL Group PLC, CRL House, 9 Kings Yard

BUZZ

ARCADES ARE NOT CINEMAS



A recent decision of the House of Lords has finally confirmed what many of us have suspected for some time: just because a venue contains a coin-op that doesn't mean that it can be classified as a cinema.

Perhaps surprisingly, this decision was not a foregone conclusion. As reported in Commodore User last May, two lower courts had previously found in favour of Westminster City Council who argued that arcades, chip shops, youth clubs and indeed any premises whatsoever which contained a video game should be covered by the Cinemas Act (1985) in that it constituted "an exhibition of moving pictures".

Under the Gaming Acts stringent regulations are laid down covering how, when, where and by whom gambling machines ("one-armed bandits" etc.) can be played, but arcade games — which don't involve any element of "gaming" — are, of course, not covered by these laws. And a certain Councillor Robert Davis and his colleague, not being able to see any distinction between gambling machines and video arcade games, decided that they would try to bring coin-ops under the Council's control in order to protect young people from being harmed by them. (When asked for any proof for the proposition that arcade games harmed young people, or anybody else, Councillor Davis and Co, declined to respond).

So the local authority scrabbled around the statutes books and eventually came up with a possible loophole in the definition of "cinema" in the above mentioned act. If the House Of Lords had agreed with Westminster City Council, Councillor Davis and his followers could have effectively banned or severely limited arcade games from being played in public by requiring that various regulations be enforced and licence fees be paid under the Cinema Acts which were, of course, utterly inappropriate and never intended to apply to coin-ops. And remember: all this could have been done without any public debate ever being held on the issue of whether arcade games are harmful to minors. Happily, however, the Lords decided otherwise.

AMIGA VIRUS MULTIPLIES

"Virus" programs which can affect, and in many cases destroy, any disk with which they come in contact are causing increasing concern among Amiga software producers, distributors, retailers and consumers.

The original virus is reported to have emanated from a Swiss-based group of hackers calling themselves the SCA (Swiss Crackers Association) but, according to Silica Shop's Paul Ellis, the "copycat" syndrome has meant that there are now at least four different viruses in existence.

None of the strains of virus permanently affect the Amiga's own operating system, but the virus is transmitted from disk to disk via temporarily "infected" computers. If the computer is not switched off at the power source betweeen booting different disks and the offending code is present on one of the disks booted, the Amiga's RAM will become a virus carrier, infecting all the disks subsequently loaded.

The effects of the virus on the disks vary, depending on the nature and complexity of the software in question. In a large number of cases the main manifestation of the virus is the appearance after booting of a message — the SCA's one reads "Something wonderful has happened — your computer has come alive" — followed by the program crashing. The virus operates randomly so that it will not show up at every booting. When the message doesn't occur, the game will usually boot and play normally. However in many other instances the effects of the virus are far more devastating: if certain disks are booted in a carrier machine, they become corrupted, and useless. In general it would seem that the more sophisticated the program, the more susceptible it is to the latter "terminal" effect.

It seems that the virus is spread either through people secretly booting infected disks into demonstration models of the Amiga in software shops or through Amiga owners running other people's pirated or borrowed software on their own machines.

While the scale of the problem is perhaps not as widespread as some of the reports have suggested, Silica Shop are taking it seriously enough to warrent the development, continual upgrading and free distribution of virus "killer" disks which will check whether a virus is present in any of your disks and remove it. They have found it necessary to produce successive upgraded killer models — within a matter of weeks — in order to deal with the new "strains" which have appeared. But for those who have shelled out large sums of money for top-of-the-range games which are totally destroyed by the virus, the killer is obviously useless: your only solution is to write to the games manufacturer or retailer for a replacement.

"I think the guys who wrote the virus are pretty warped", says Silica Shop's Paul Ellis, "most of the people buying Amiga games are young people, paying with hard-earned money. And with this virus anyone who's made a major investment in Amiga software could find that their collection has been ruined".

Among the companies whose products are most seriously threatened are Amiga specialists like Psygnosis and Novagen. "Anybody whose products contain a sophisticated protection system, like ours, will have their software destroyed by the virus", according to Novagen's Bruce Jordan.

How can a virus be transmitted onto write/protected disks? Despite some mutters within the software industry suggesting shortcomings in the Amiga's write/protect system, Electronic Arts' Mark Lewis feels that this is unfair, citing instances in the past of viruses occuring in IBM and Apple systems: "I don't believe that there's a disk drive built that can't in certain circumstances be made to write to a write/protected disk".

And the selfish jerks who programmed the virus?

"I don't think you could print what I'd do to them if I got hold of them", was how Paul Ellis summed up his feelings. But EA-man Mark Lewis had rather different views: "these guys are, basically, criminals, operating on the edge of the industry. But I also think that the virus-creators are most creative people, and I just wish that they'd ring me up so I could get them using their talents in positive rather than negative ways, writing games rather than destroying them."

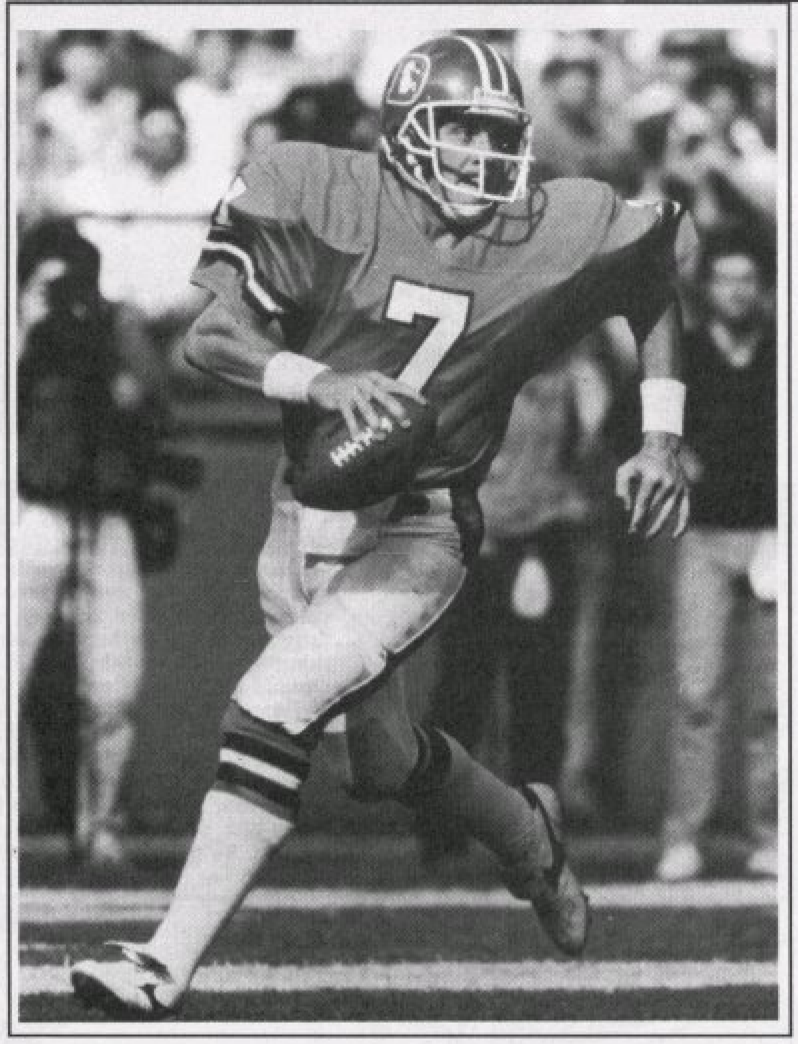
SAFE BOOTING — how to protect your disk collection:

1. Only buy software from accredited dealers — don't pirate, or use pirated software.

2. Always switch off your Amiga *at the power source* between booting games — the virus can't be spread if your RAM is clean.

3. Check all your disks for the virus and disinfect any that you find to be affected. You can do this by using a reputably manufactured "virus killer" — Silica Shop will send you their latest "killer" program, complete with detailed instructions on how to use it, if you write to them, enclosing a (preferably formated) blank 3½" disk plus a suitable stamped addressed envelope, at: Amiga Virus Killer, Silica Shop, 1-4 The Mews, Hatherley Road, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 4DX.

4. Have all software checked in the shop before purchase.



MASTERTRONIC SIGN UP QUARTERBACK

Mastertronic have just signed up the conversion rights for an American Football coin-up endorsed by the man who is arguably the world's hottest quarterback, John Elway.

The arcade version of *Quarterback* is at present only available in the States, but so popular has the sport become on this side of the pond (*well . . . Ed*) that Mastertronic have decided to release *Quarterback,* on both Amiga and 64, in the United Kingdom, with the projected launch being planned to coincide with the start of the new American Football season in August.

Despite the fact his team, the Denver Broncos, were humiliated in the recent Superbowl final by the Washington Redskins, Elway is still one of the sport's best known and most highly regarded figures, and his endoursement of the arcade game *Quarterback* will almost certainly ensure that it is a US coin-op hit. Mastertronic clearly hope that they'll score with the UK conversion too.

To celebrate their acquisition of the *Quarterback* licence, Mastertronic have very kindly offered to give on of those groovey-looking high-flying genuine leather American footballs to the first CU reader who can correctly identify the Washington Redskin's quarterback who overshadowed poor old John in the Superbowl by leading his team to victory and into the record books, smashing the previous Superbowl high-score total for a single quarter. Answers please to **Quarterback Compo, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.**

AMIGA TV STAR

Those who foolishly think that the Amiga is merely a superfab games machine will be surprised to learn that two of Channel 4's hippest "youth entertainment" shows have been using the big A to design their impressive on-screen graphics.

"Network 7" have been using the Amiga to generate graphics since the show was first broadcast in April of last year, and "The Chart Show" has now used Amiga technology for some fifteen months.

"It's a very good fast graphic computer", explains Keith Macmillan, executive producer of both shows, "we've all gone Commodore-mad round here. Basically we write all our own software for the Amiga. We also build on a lot of electronic black boxes at the end to enable broadcasting".

Channel 4 chose the Amiga above other "pre-formed" graphics packages, many of which Macmillan feels are poor value for the price. "Network 7"'s characteristic rapid-fire graphic images are designed by a graphic designer working on the Amiga, while "The Chart Show" uses the computer to formulate its "icon" feature — those panels which flash up on part of the screen giving tour dates and other information concerning the band playing.

Those of you who conscientously scour your CU cover-to-cover will have noticed an ad in last month's ish, inviting Amiga artists and programmers who might be interested in working on "Network 7"'s second series — which kicks off in May — to send C.V. and demo disk to one Shelley O'Neill. But, for those of you lazy sods who missed it, Shelley's address is Video Visuals, 300 Fulham Road, London SW10 8BY.

SOUNDTRACK JARRES

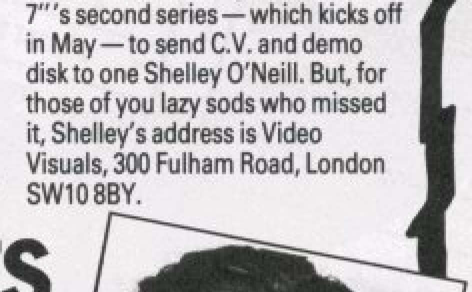
French software house Ere Informatique, distributed in this country by Infogrames, have the rights to use the music of French techno wiz muso Jean Michel Jarre on future releases.

The first example will appear towards the end of April on *Captain Blood* which will contain excerpts from Jarre's 84 'Zoolook' LP.

Captain Blood, which, its promoters modestly claim, has "the best graphics seen on a computer", is a combination arcade/strategy game in which the eponymous hero must travel the galaxy in search of clones which will enable him to restore his ebbing life fluid.

Musically, perhaps best known for his albums "Oxygene" and "Equinoxe", Jarre has also become renowned for his incredible sound-and-light shows.

Infogrames have very kindly donated five copies of "Zoolook", plus five copies of *Captain Blood,* to the first five CU readers out of the hat who can tell us when the Spring Equinox occurs this year. **Entries to Captain Blood Compo, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.**



Take us to your Leader (again!!!): **Clearly of the opinion that you can't have too much of a good thing, those Access/US Gold folk have just announced the release of yet another version of *Leaderboard — World Class Leaderboard: Famous Courses Of The World.* In its various guises *Leaderboard* has spent over a year in the charts, and, those of us with good eyesight and low pain thresholds have noted that the latest copy is subtitled *Volume 1,* implying — as if you hadn't begun to get the message by now — that the *Leaderboard* saga may still have a few more chapters to go.**

Empty Pocket Sprockets: **Their ever-increasing sales, plus the fall in the value of the dollar, have combined to enable sprocketeers Evesham Micros to reduce their already low priced Excelerator disk drive (now bundled with GEOS) by another £30 to just £129. For another £20 you can have a freeze machine thrown in. And, for those of you lucky enough to own an Amiga, and feel you could do with a supplementary drive, Evesham will shortly be releasing an Amiga-compatible disk drive which will retail at £99.95 — a full £100 less than Commodore's own.**

UK Emulator: **Further to our piece on American company Readysoft's 64 emulator for the Amiga, Robtek have just announced that they will be distributing this likely-to-be-sought-after piece of hardware in these parts. The emulator should be in British shops any week now and will retail for the princely sum of £69.95.**

E. A. Taped: **Good news for those unfortunates who fancied a bash at Electronic Arts' *P. H. M. Pegasus* or *Chuck Yeager's A. F. T.* sims but didn't have access to the necessary disk drive: E. A. have just announced that these two programs are being released on cassette format too, and will retail at £9.95 each.**

VENOMous Sequel: **For those of you who haven't yet had your fill of *M.A.S.K.* games (there must be *somebody* out there . . .), Gremlin have just made public the impending release of the third child in this licence *VENOM Strikes Back,* in which Matt Tracker's son Scott has been kidnapped by VENOM and is being held in their moon HQ. No prizes for guessing what you've got to do.**

Hubbard move confirmed: **As Buzz exclusively predicted in the December ish, software soundtrack supremo Rob Hubbard has now officially joined the Electronic Arts team and will in the future be working solely for them. He'll be based in EA's American HQ, but will also be working in association with the company's burgeoning British software development team on British-originated products, the first of which is projected for release in June.**

CHA

ADVENTURE CHART

TM	LM		
1	1	DEFENDER OF THE CROWN	MIRRORSOFT
2	NE	KOBYASH	MASTERTRONIC
3	3	JACK THE RIPPER	CRL
4	NE	KAYLETH	ADVENTURESOFT
5	2	GUILD OF THIEVES	RAINBIRD
6	6	GNOME RANGER	LEVEL 9
7	5	KILLED UNTIL DEAD	US GOLD
3	7	RIGELS REVENGE	MASTERTRONIC
9	9	KNIGHT ORC	RAINBIRD
10	10	PAWN	RAINBIRD

READERS COIN-OP CHART

TM	LM	
1	2	OUT RUN
2	3	DOUBLE DRAGON
3	1	AFTERBURNER
4	RE	R-TYPE
5	RE	ROAD RUNNER

Ho hum. Your charts have been pouring in in even greater volumes than ever before, and they're mostly saying the same thing as last month: *Out Run, Double Dragon, Afterburner* and *R-Type* remain the top four. But there is a re-entry for *Road Runner* at number five spot. Keep 'em coming, coin-op freaks, and remember that the first five top fives out of the hat get a CU T-Shirt. So tell us whether you're "S", "M" or "L".

CHART CHAT

Having rocketed straight into the number one slot despite almost universal lukewarm reviews there's still no shifting *Out Run*. Quality does shine through somewhere and that's at the number two spot with Ocean's *Platoon* shooting straight into the number two spot. Watch out next month for its jungle counterpart *Predator*.

Elsewhere *Test Drive* makes a good showing coming straight in at number five. However with the Christmas and New Year spending sprees now gone cheapos return in force with no less than eleven of them. Watch out there for *Ricochet*, *Ghostbusters* and *I Ball 2*, all potential number ones.

Over on Amiga the expectancy built up over Mirrorsoft's *Xenon*'s arcade style graphics and gameplay put it straight to the top of everyone's spending list, whilst the chance to play *Gauntlet* as it should be played puts Garrison just below it in your priorities. Further down the line *Barbarian* is still plugging away. It's been there ever since we started running an Amiga chart. Also, interestingly enough, Cinemascope's adventure Shadowgate just slips in at number ten. Watch out for *Mercenary* and the beautifull created *Golden Path*.

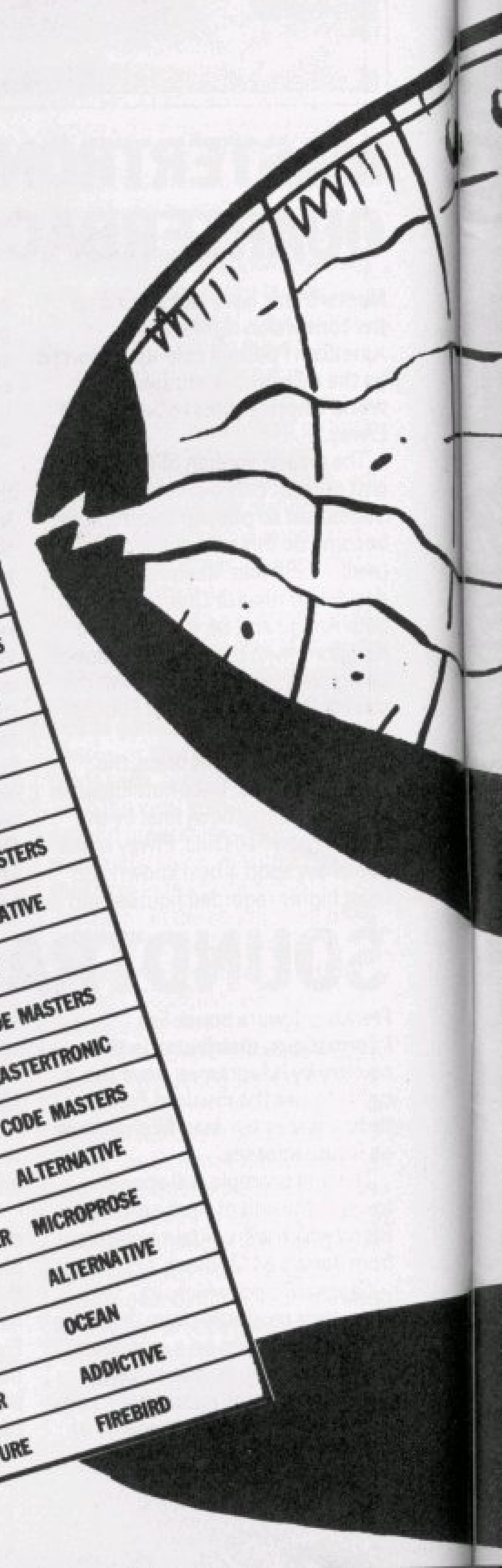
TOP TEN SILLY HAIRCUTS

From a list of hundreds. . .

1) Gary 'Haystack' Penn
A fright mass bigger than the tallest of buildings
2) Terry Wogan
Which particular wig though?
3) Michael Heseltine
A wild attempt by Tarzan to look young. . .
4) Sinead O'Connor
"Skinhead" O'Connor — a woman with a voice like a rusty gate.
5) Mr T
Who's going to tell him, though. Murdoch!
6) B52s
What's that on your head? A WIIIGG!
7) Terence Trent D'Arby
A good spell in the army would sort him out. He's had one? Oh. . .
8) Glenn Hoddle
Still sporting the same 70s hairdo over ten years later. No wonder he was dropped.
9) Ruud Gullit
Holland's footballing superstar — gets whiplash every time he heads the ball.
10) Mary (Eastenders)
No wonder they took the baby away. . .

C64 CHART

TM	LM		
1	1	OUT RUN	SEGA-US GOLD
2	NE	PLATOON	OCEAN
3	3	MATCH DAY 2	OCEAN
4	2	COMBAT SCHOOL	OCEAN
5	2	TEST DRIVE	ELECTRONIC ARTS
6	NE	ATV SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
7	13	MAGNIFICENT 7	OCEAN
8	13	ARCADE CLASSICS	FIREBIRD
9	3	GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
10	NE	TRAP DOOR	ALTERNATIVE
12	5	CALIFORNIA GAMES	EPYX
12	15	FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
13	19	KIK START 2	MASTERTRONIC
14	RE	BMX SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
15	NE	POPEYE	ALTERNATIVE
16	NE	PROJECT STEALTH FIGHTER	MICROPROSE
17	17	SOCCER BOSS	ALTERNATIVE
18	7	LIVE AMMO	OCEAN
19	RE	FOOTBALL MANAGER	ADDICTIVE
20	19	BACK TO THE FUTURE	FIREBIRD



ARTS



CRITIC'S SELECTION

What's everyone playing at the moment?
MIKE PATTENDEN: *Superstar Soccer* — Sega (Games Console), *Arkanoid* — Discovery (Amiga)
GARY PENN: *Mercenary* — Novagen (Amiga), IO — Firebird (64)
NICK KELLY — *Thunderblade* — Sega (coin-op), *Traz* — Cascade (64)
MARK PATTERSON: *Golden Path* — Firebird (Amiga), *Ricochet* Firebird (64)

AMIGA CHART

TM	LM		
1	NE	XENON	MELBOURNE HOUSE
2	NE	GARRISON	RAINBOW ARTS
3	1	TEST DRIVE	ELECTRONIC ARTS
4	5	DEFENDER OF THE CROWN	MIRRORSOFT
5	4	BARBARIAN	PSYGNOSIS
6	2	BACKLASH	NOVAGEN
7	10	CRAZY CARS	TETRIS
8	NE	DARK CASTLE	MIRRORSOFT
9	NE	GRID START	ANCO
10	NE	SHADOWGATE	MIRRORSOFT

C.U. READERS VOTES VOTES

READE

We took the seven trillion answers you sent us in response to our Crucial Poll. We discarded the twenty-five billion that were obscene, unintelligible or contained references to Chelsea Football Club. We fed the remaining ninety-three squillion into our data-response-accumulator-synthesis-modulator. We pressed the red button, then the blue button, then the lime-green button. We waited for the whirring to stop and the smoke to clear. We looked at the random-statistical-interpretation-anode-monitor. And this is what we saw:

BEST COIN-OP.

1. Out Run (Sega)
2. Afterburnex (Sega)
3. Double Dragon (Taito)
4. R-Type (Irem Corp.)
5. 720° (Atari)

Well, what a year it was for mega arcade games, and undoubtedly the one that made the biggest impression of all was Sega's brilliant driving game, Out Run. Sega also snatched number two spot with their truly wild customised shoot 'em up, Aterburner.

BEST SHOOT 'EM UP.

1. Delta (Thalamus)
2. Mega Apocalypse (Martech)
3. Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit (Outlaw/Sensible Software)
4. Wizball (Ocean)
5. Zynaps (Hewson)

A comprehensive win in this catagor for Thalamus, whose Delta game nearly three times as many votes as nearest competition. And with the Se ble lads' brilliant construction weighing in third, it looks like a you are Doing It Yourselves these

OVERALL BEST GAME.

1. California Games *(Epyx/US Gold)*
2. The Last Ninja *(System 3)*
3. Defender Of The Crown *(Mirrorsoft)*
4. Bubble Bobble *(Firebird)*
5. Wizball *(Ocean)*

Congrats to Epyx, whose totally awesome sports sim just pipped System 3's superb oriental arcade adventure for the supreme accolade, CU Readers' Game Of The Year.

BEST AMIGA GAME.

1. Garrison *(Simply Megaware)*
2. Barbarian *(Psygnosis)*
3. Defender Of The Crown *(Mirrorsoft)*
4. Starglider II *(Rainbird)*
5. Crazy Cars *(Titus)*

A narrow win here for the game that reputedly kept Gauntlet off the Amiga, but a strong showing by Psygnosis' exellent Barbarian *and* Mirrorsoft's *ace adventure,* Defender Of The Realm.

BEST SIM (SPORTS).

1. California Games *(Epyx/US Gold)*
2. World Games *(Epyx/US Gold)*
3. World Class Leaderboard *(Access/US Gold)*
4. International Karate + *(System 3)*
5. Match Day II *(Ocean)*

The biggest winning margin of any category, California Games annhilated all comers — and US Gold compounded their dominance by taking second and third place too.

BEST ARCADE ADVENTURE.

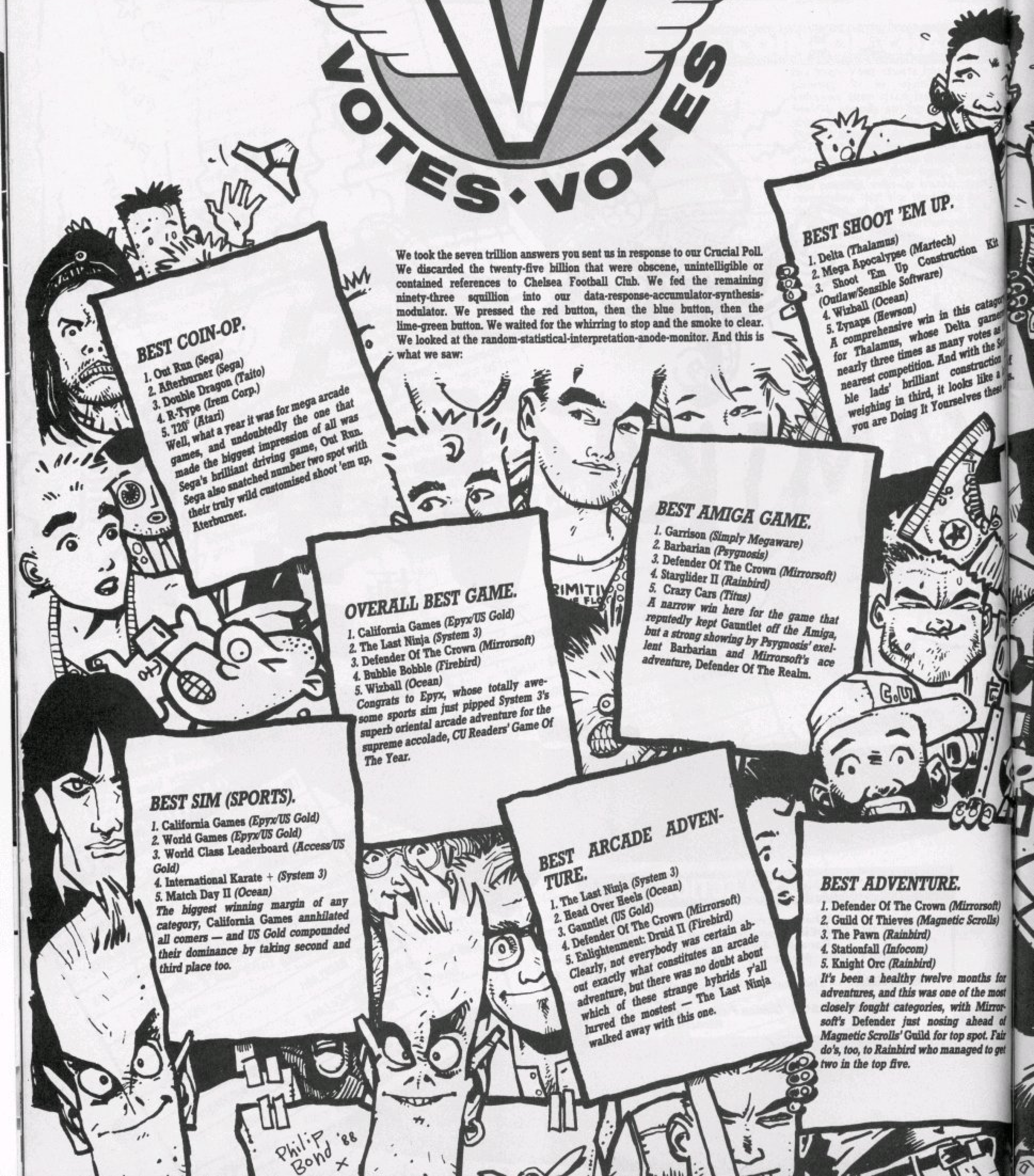
1. The Last Ninja (System 3)
2. Head Over Heels (Ocean)
3. Gauntlet (US Gold)
4. Defender Of The Crown (Mirrorsoft)
5. Enlightenment: Druid II (Firebird)

Clearly, not everybody was certain about exactly what constitutes an arcade adventure, but there was no doubt about which of these strange hybrids y'all lurved the mostest — The Last Ninja walked away with this one.

BEST ADVENTURE.

1. Defender Of The Crown *(Mirrorsoft)*
2. Guild Of Thieves *(Magnetic Scrolls)*
3. The Pawn *(Rainbird)*
4. Stationfall *(Infocom)*
5. Knight Orc *(Rainbird)*

It's been a healthy twelve months for adventures, and this was one of the most closely fought categories, with Mirrorsoft's Defender just nosing ahead of Magnetic Scrolls' Guild for top spot. Fair do's, too, to Rainbird who managed to get two in the top five.



DERS' POLL RESULTS



BEST SIM (FLIGHT/DRIVING/SAILING).

1. Gunship (Microprose)
2. Buggy Boy (Elite)
3. Stealth Fighter (Microprose)
4. Out Run (US Gold)
5. Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer (Electronic Arts)

Another runaway victory, this time for Wild Bill Stealey and Co's wonderous Gunship. And Microprose were only just denied a spectacular double by Elite's Buggy Boy which barely outpolled the Sim King's latest biggie, Stealth Fighter for the number two slot.

OVERALL WORST GAME.

1. Enduro Racer (Activision)
2. Ninja Master (Firebird)
3. Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom (US Gold)
4. Inspector Gadget (Melbourne House)
5. Grange Hill (Argus)

Duff games? Well, it seems like everybody had their own personal least favourite, but top of the bottom of the list was Activision's dismal conversion of the Enduro Racer, which managed to fight off stiff competition from Firebird's Ninja Master and US Gold's Indiana Jones for bottom spot.

BEST FILM/VIDEO.

1. Crocodile Dundee
2. Aliens
3. Beverly Hills Cop II
4. Heartbreak Ridge
5. The Living Daylights

Fittingly, you celebrated the beginning of Australia's bicentennial by voting affable macho wit Paul Hogan's "Crocodile Dundee" number one, though a sizeable number of you plumbed for the good old fashioned shiver-till-you-quiver appeal of "Aliens".

MOST WONDERFUL HUMAN BEING.

1. Mike Pattenden
2. Me (Shurely shome Mishtake — Ed.)
3. My mother (???!!?!? — Ed.)
4. Sam Fox
5. Gary Penn

Didn't he do well, then? Yup, it appears that ol' Hotshots himself has wormed his way further into your hearts than even yourselves, your old dears and that sultry striptress Sam Fox. Worra lad, eh! (Good job I sent in all those entries — MP)

BEST TV PROGRAMME.

1. East Enders
2. Moonlighting
3. Black Adder III
4. Neighbours
5. Spitting Image

Den, Wicksy, Angie, Dot Cotton and Co, just staving off the challenge of Bruce Willis, Cybil Shepherd and Rowan Atkinson here, with the hateful "Neighbours" following close behind. Wot, no "Songs Of Praise"???

BIGGEST DIVVY.

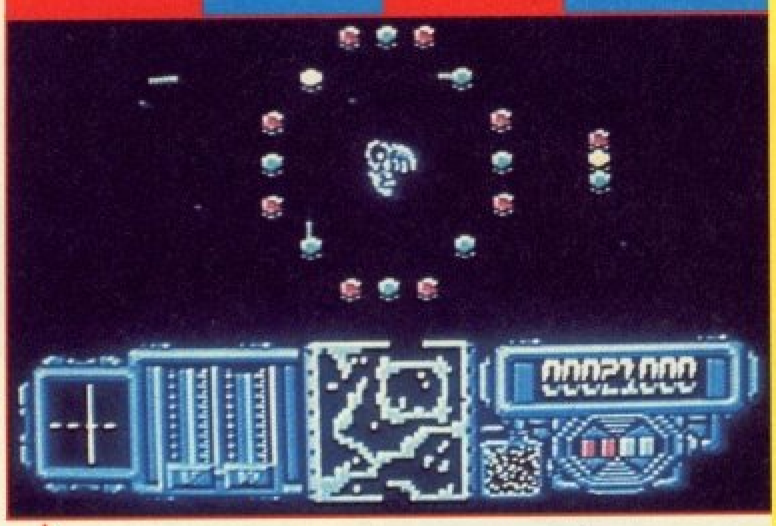
1. Mike Pattenden
2. Eugene Lacey
3. Neil Kinnock
4. Julian Rignall (Zzap Ed)
5. Margaret Thatcher

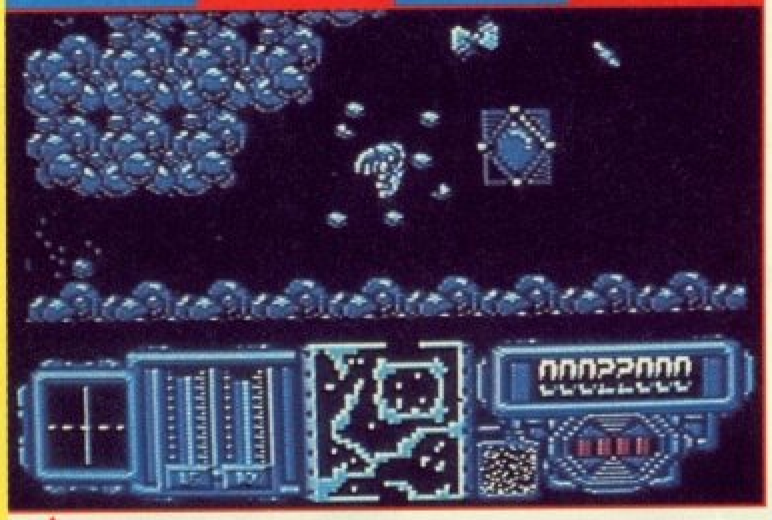
Yes, we know what you're wondering, how can Mike Pattenden be both the world's most wonderful human being and Div of the Year, beating off even the likes of the treacherous Johnny Suit-ed one himself? Well, if you worked with him, perhaps you'd understand . . . (OK so who sent all those entries in because it certainly wasn't me? — MP)

BEST LP.

1. "Bad" (Michael Jackson)
2. "Now 10" (Various)
3. "Bridge Of Spies" (T'Pau)
4. "Hysteria" (Def Leppard)
5. "Invisible Touch" (Genesis)

Wacko Jacko topped the charts here, beating the latest "Now" compilation by several lengths — no surprise there. But we were amazed how many of you threw your lot in with the rather wimpy T'Pau whose main claim to fame would seem to be pervliciousness of lead singer, Carol Decker.





Hop into a transporter and buzz off.

Entering a power unit.

Special FX/ Ocean 64/128 Price: £8.95

FIREFLY

C.U. Screen Star

What a brilliant idea! No Ian Macaskill and Michael Fish, no snow at Easter, no wet summers, no late hurricane warnings. So there are you after several years in deep space returning home looking forward to relaxing in perfectly adjusted temperatures only to find all the weather stations have GONE PIGGIN' WRONG! I suppose you'll have to fly around the 24 weather stations and close them down before you can put your feet up. And that is Special FX' new game *Firefly*.

You begin on a grid, a sort of galactic chessboard and move a figure into a square. This takes you into the first level, the idea being to work your way through the levels, and hence across the grid so you can trip the switch that shuts the whole thing down.

Shutting down each level is the core of the game. You pilot your ship around the various zones looking for power units. To shut each unit down you have to collect four pieces of, well 'cosmic snot' was how programmer Tony Pomfrett described it to me. Anyway when you have a handkerchief full of it you can enter the unit and shut it down. Turning off the power is little more than an exercise in timing.

As you explore each level (a small map at the bottom of the screen shows you where you are) you'll have to use transporters to hop around various sections. To utilise these you have to succeed with another piece of deft timing. Your ship spins in the centre of a lot of green and red lights and you have to hit three green ones. Each time you hit a green light though, the ship spins quicker.

A mass of aliens dotted round the various systems will also sap this energy. Your only defence is a fairly puny ring of boomerang bullets which circle your ship. The only way to restore lost energy is to shoot the odd floating fish which passes very every now and again. Hitting it and catching it causes the background structures to bleed blue droplets *Wizball*-style which can then be collected to top up that lost energy. It's a bit like cosmic lucozade.

Once you succeed in shutting down the four power units you'll be taken back to the grid where you can move your figure another zone closer to the main switch.

Firefly takes its inspiration from an old game called *Zone Ranger*. *Firefly* is particularly original game in its own way and has lots of ideas contained within it. The graphics (put together by Karen Davies) are colourful and detailed, the sound neat and effective whilst the little sub games give it a diversity of interest that I found missing from something like *Hunter's Moon* which it resembles. In all *Firefly* is a very polished package and it proves that *Hysteria* was no one-off.

Mike Pattenden.

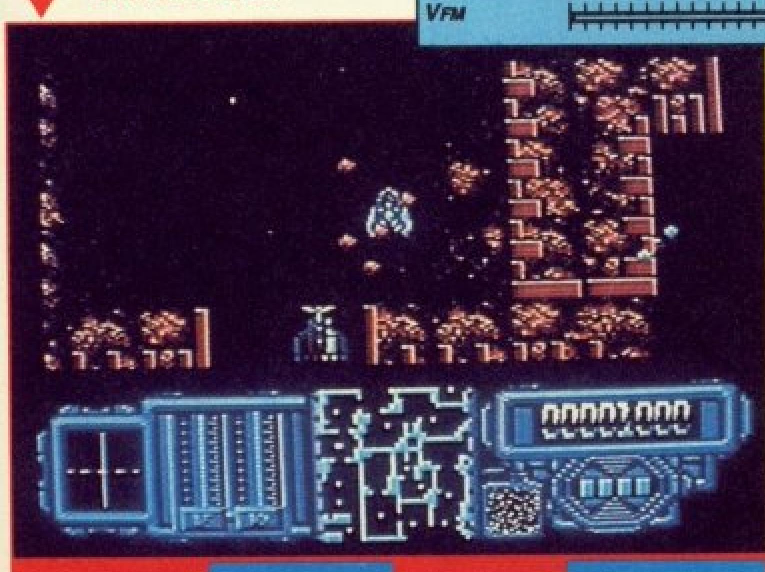
FIREFLY — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

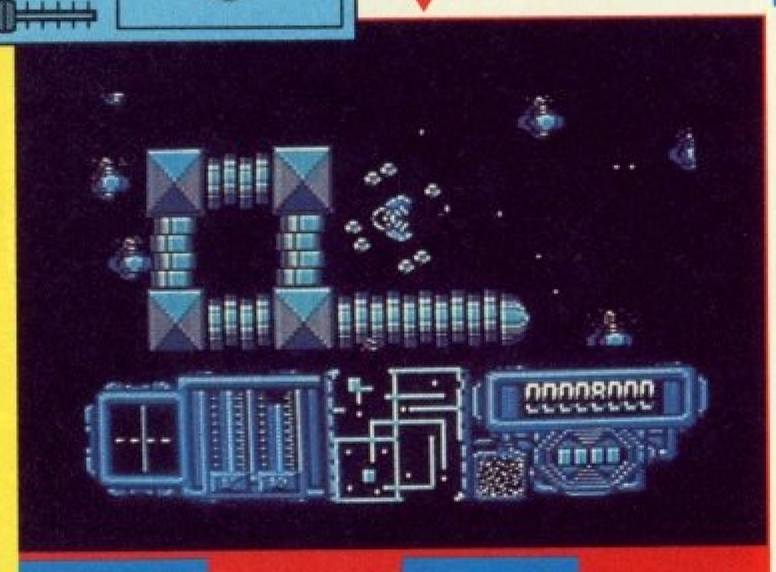
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Video								●		
Audio								●		
Toughness							●			
Endurance								●		
VFM								●		

CU RATING: **8**

Brick based level.

Phallic tubing.





64/128
Imagine
Price: £8.95 (cass)
£12.95 (disk)

GRYZOR

Konami's coin-op received a fairly mellow reception when it first appeared almost a year ago — arguably because its release was overshadowed by that of two breath-taking racing games: namely Konami's *WEC Le Mans* and Sega's *Out Run*. Still, its popularity hasn't stopped Imagine converting it to the 64.

Gryzor is a shoot 'em up — more accurately, a mixture of three types of shoot 'em up spread over eight levels. Taking control of crack commando Lance Gryzor it's up to you to battle through and disable enemy outposts before penetrating and destroying the mothership at the end of the last level. On the first level Lance has to negotiate a short, horizontally scrolling landscape, avoiding or destroying enemy soldiers and gun emplacements. Collecting the red pods found along the way gives you one of four extra weapons — rapid fire, laser, scatter or shield. Sadly, you can only have one of these goodies active.

Having reached the end of the level and blown a hole in the wall of the enemy base, Lance has to find his way to the control room via a simple tunnel network. However, the corridors are patrolled by enemy guards, who are best shot before they shoot you, and a deadly electric barrier which prevents progress . . . until the relevant switch at the end of the corridor is destroyed.

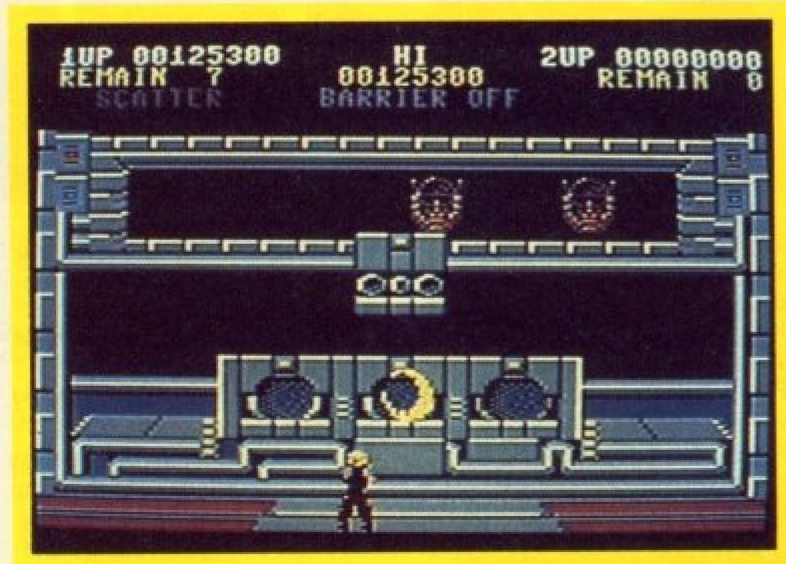
Once the control room has been destroyed the second outpost has to be penetrated and erradicated, which involves completing a more difficult tunnel network and an extremely well defended control room.

The seventh level is another horizontally scrolling landscape, only this time it's a lot longer, more varied and considerably harder. Giant, boulder-spitting American footballers make a bizarre and unwelcome appearance, along with electrified barriers and a fireball-breathing dragon's head at the end of the level.

Destroying the beast allows you to enter the mother ship and attempt to reach its centre to destroy it. And believe me, this is far from easy. In fact the whole game is far from easy. The main problem is having to use the space bar to jump — and as the action hots up it becomes increasingly difficult and frustrating trying to manoeuvre Lance, shoot maurading enemy soldiers AND jump at the same time . . .

The problems of control and toughness undermine this

Lance stands his ground in the control room of the second enemy outpost.

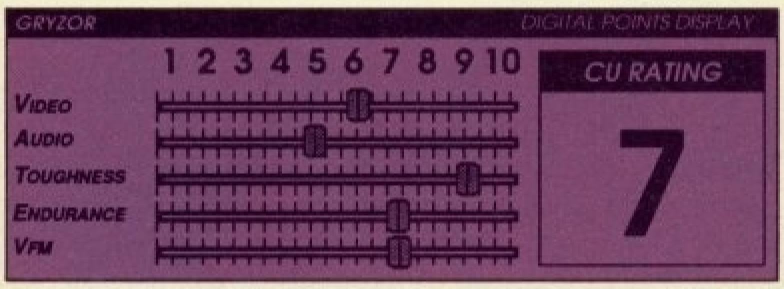


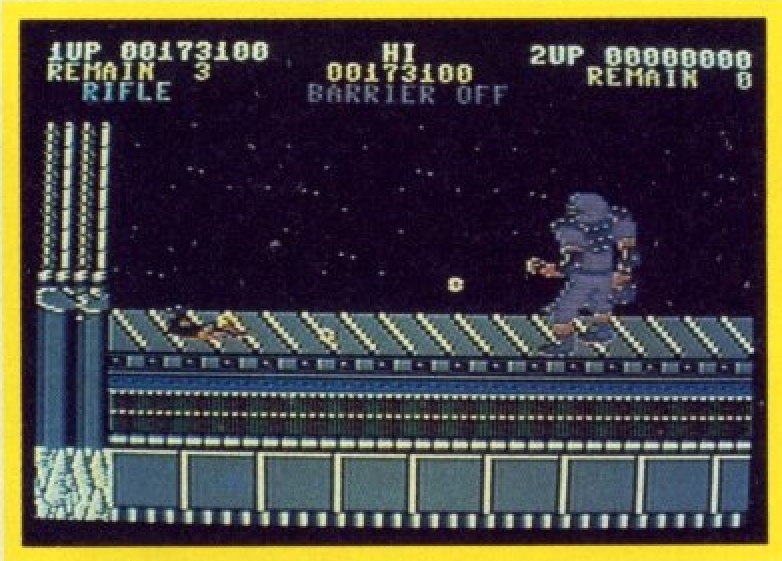
Dishing out a dense dose of death and destruction at the end of the first level.





conversion of *Gryzor*. It certainly falls below the standards Ocean have created recently with the release of *Platoon* and *Rastan Saga*. Nevertheless as conversions go, *Gryzor* isn't a disaster. The graphics and sound could certainly have been better, (Martin Galway is sadly missed) but I must own up to deriving some perverse gratification from playing it, so if you're a masochist this is right up your street. Everyone else ought to think twice before splashing out.
Gary Penn





As the graphics get worse the action gets harder . . .

Not even icy wastes deter Lance Gryzor from completing his mission.

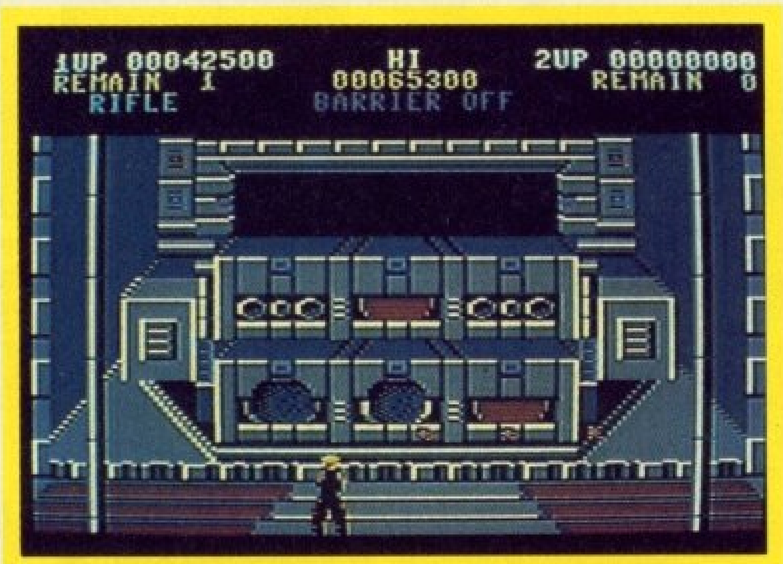




Yoiks! Only 21 seconds for Lance to battle through the corridors to . .

The heavily guarded entrance to the second outpost

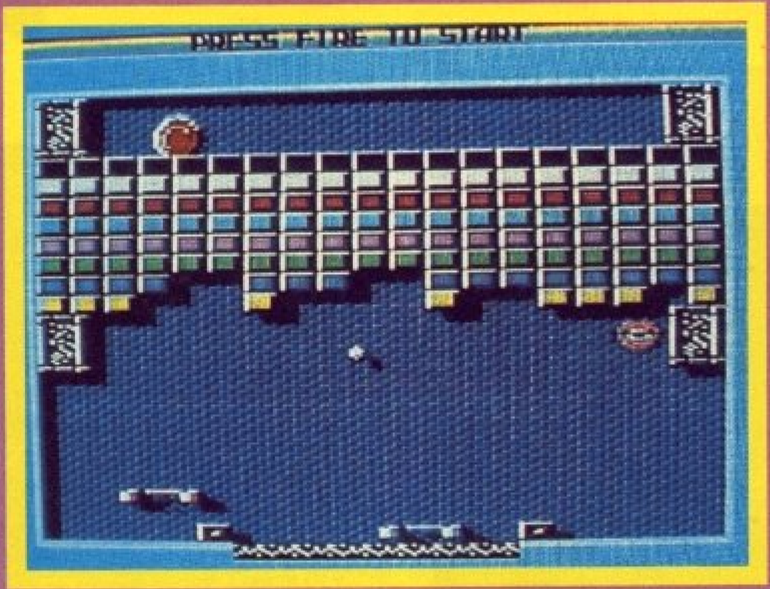




. . . the control room at the heart of the first outpost.

64/128
Cascade
Price:
£9.95/cass
£14.95/disk

TRAZ

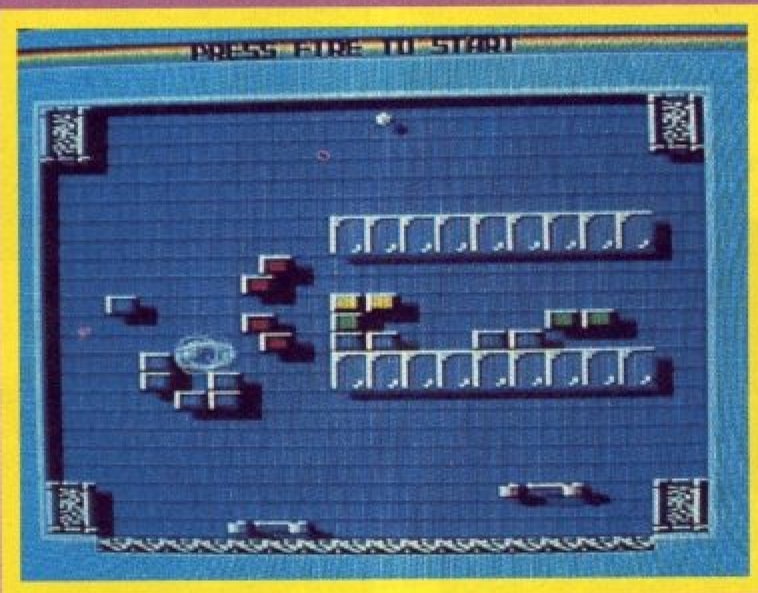


One trap, two bats and a houseload of bricks.

Cascade would be the first to admit that the basic game concept behind *Traz* isn't startlingly original: you've got to use bats and balls to dislodge bricks until the screen is cleared. Yes, it's *Breakout* for the umpteenth time.

But it's the frills that are worth talking about, and, as a certified *Breakout* nutter, I can confirm that the frills on *Traz* are pretty neat.

Traz, incidentally, is short for Transformable Arcade Zone. Why Transformable? Simple: one of the major features of this package is that it contains what is, at least to my knowledge, the first ever Breakout Construction Kit. Why no one ever got around to doing this before is a mystery to me. The editor is a wee bit user-unfriendly, but once you've worked out how to use it you can construct your very own screens. There are a plethora of possible arrangements from vertical, horizontal, indestructible, distorting and monster-generating blocks, "traps" (areas which you've got to keep the ball out of — *Traz* allows you to lay them on any of the four walls, not just at the foot of the screen), bats (you can have more than one, beside each other, perpendicular to one another or even stacked) and balls. Even if you're not generally into building-your-own games, you should have a shot at this. The on-screen instructions may be confusing, but the end results are impressive.



Where will the distorting blocks send the ball?

But even without the Construction Kit option, *Traz* would be a pretty fun game. The idea is that you have to battle your way through a multi-screen complex (you choose from a variety of opening screens, simply by pressing run/stop). The arrangements of blocks are considerably more complex than, say, *Arkanoid,* largely due to the fact that you are often asked to control more than one bat on different screen walls. Even if you're playing with a mate in the two-player team mode provided, it can be fairly tricky trying to cope with traps scattered about the play area, and if you're on your own you can get seasick trying to use your joystick's up/down plane to move one bat and the left/right plane to control the other.

The bricks you're trying to take out come in two classic shapes — horizontal and vertical. You can't do anything about the indestructible ones or the transparent ones which distort the ball's flight: they're simply put in to make things tougher. There are also different kinds of monster icons which appear and float around the screen, *Arkanoid*-style, and can affect the ball's flight-path if it touches them.

The destruction of a brick is frequently accompanied by a falling question-mark icon which can be picked up with your bat (assuming you're not too occupied keeping the ball out of the trap). There's no way of telling what effect any one of these will have: some give you an instant multi-ball or a temporary brick-shooter housed in your bat; some will slow the ball down or speed it up to an uncontrollable pace; some distort the ball's flight; and one beauty even "smart-bombs" the entire screen, thereby giving you an instant passage to the next level.

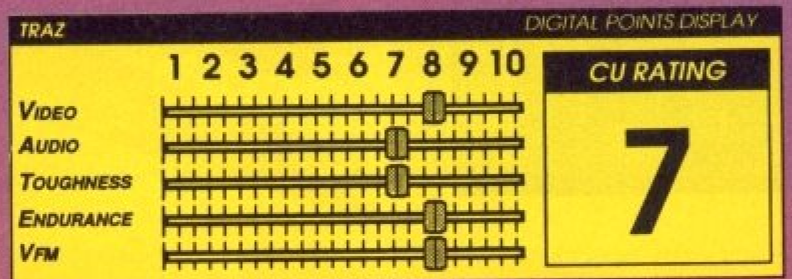
You get five lives, with a bonus life awarded for each level completed, but believe me, this isn't over-generous: even on the initial screens, you're going to have to be lucky not to drop one or two, and once you get on to any of the second stages (these vary according to whichever start-off level you selected) you'll be faced with some very tough challenges indeed. Frequently you'll have to control *four* separate bats at once, assuming you're playing by yourself.



Traz — you'll be trapped too.

No, I don't think you're going to tire of *Traz* in a hurry. Cascade have taken the proven tooth-grinding compulsiveness of the genre and enhanced it with a host of clever touches. The endlessly varied screens, the multi-plane bats, and the inclusion of a construction kit — the presence of any one of these features would make this game worth a look for the serious *Arka*-freak. By cramming all of them, and more, into one product, Cascade have done us proud.

Nick Kelly




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YOU CAN'T CALL IT A SIMULATION, THERE'S TOO MUCH ACTION. YOU CAN'T CALL IT AN ARCADE, THERE ARE TOO MANY REAL DECISIONS. YOU'D BETTER JUST CALL FOR BATTLESTATIONS!
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Price: £9.95/cass £14.95/disk

4TH AND INCHES

For those of you who are not familiar with the sport of American Football the first thing to note about *4th & Inches* is that there's absolutely no point in loading it up, pressing fire and seeing how well you get on: a lengthy perusal of the drab instructions sheet is unavoidable. American football, you soon come to understand, is heavy on tactics, and you have to try to work out from the meagre information provided what moves like "Draw, Run", "Short Curl, Pass" and "Streak, Long Pass" actually mean on the field of play.

There are some 36 different plays possible in all, 16 possible team formations plus all the different player positions (although there are only eleven team players on the field at any one time, just like in the real thing specialist players are brought on for specific plays). And, as if that wasn't enough to master, the program gives individual names and characteristics (speed, toughness, etc.) to each player on each team. It all seems like a tremendous amount of studying to do before you so much as get down to the line of scrimmage.

Anyhow, when you've decided that you're as ready as you'll ever be, you select one of the two teams and give the other either to your mate or the computer. Press the fire button and one of the ill-defined little figures boots the ball. The screen initially shows the area surrounding the half-way line, with about 10 yards in either direction depicted. The ball, of course, travels way beyond this area, with both teams' players in hot pursuit, but the game steps rather than scrolls. Incidentally, neither you nor your opponent is doing anything at all yet — the game is playing itself. The ball is eventually caught by a player, who then flashes to show that he is now operational. A short arcade sequence follows during which you try to guide this player as far back up the field as you can before the opposing hordes swarm around and tackle you.

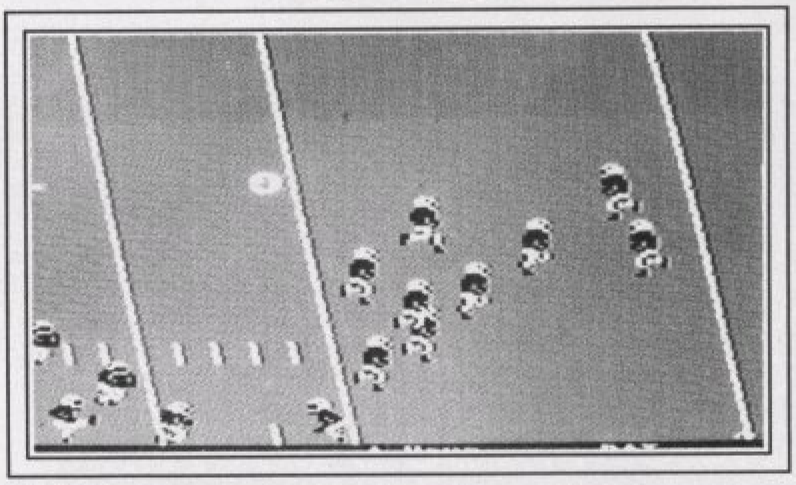
Once the tackle has been made, three successive menus appear underneath either player's team to enable you to decide the strategy for the next play. These menus give you five possible team formations, play selections and players to choose from. If you're playing against a real live opponent, your joystick-controlled cursor (options are represented by North, South, East, West or Centre) is invisible, thereby keeping your selections secret. If you've got possession, the options will relate to attacking plays, while your opponent is offered a range of defensive plays.

All that happens in the actual "Play" is that the ball is passed back to the flashing quarterback (controlled by you) who can then decide whether to throw, kick or run the ball, and when to do so. Perhaps there's some very subtle skill involved in calculating exactly when to let your pass (the most common move) fly, but if there is I was too dopey to work it out. Basically, you've already decided, by your various menu choices, what you're going to do, and so has your opponent, so the skill needed during the arcade phase is pretty minimal — the game does most of it for you. If the ball has been passed you have to try to move the receiver you've previously selected underneath it to make the catch. There are so many other players of both sides swarming around, and the sprites are so poorly defined, that whether or not your flashing receiver manages to make the play complete is totally hit-or-miss. If he doesn't, it's back to the line of scrimmage or, if the four "downs" have been exhausted possession changes. If he does, he can try to run upfield, avoiding tackles, towards the end zone.

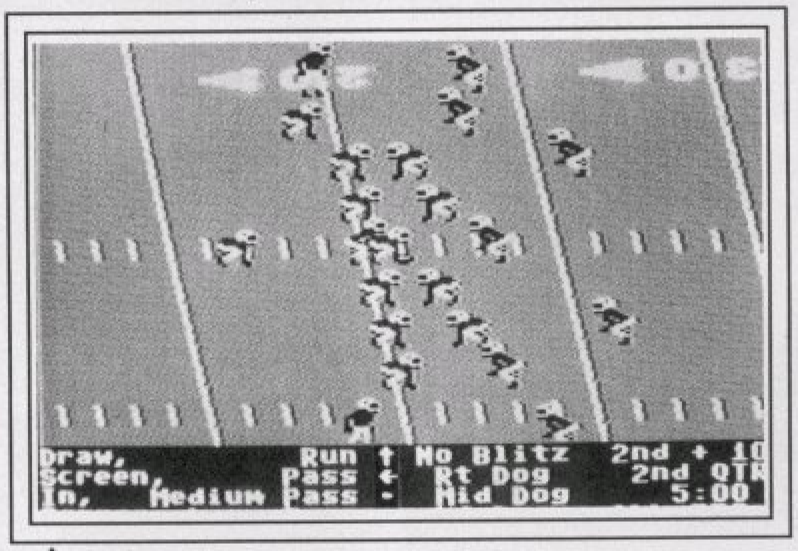
4th & Inches does stick fairly closely to the rules and tactics of American Football. The quarters tick away, you can call time outs, players do intercept passes and hand off tackles. But so much of the gameplay is automatic or predetermined that there's very little sense of playing the game yourself.

You get all the frustrating interruptions of American Football with absolutely none of the thrills, skills and spills. A Long Pass? I think I would if I were you.

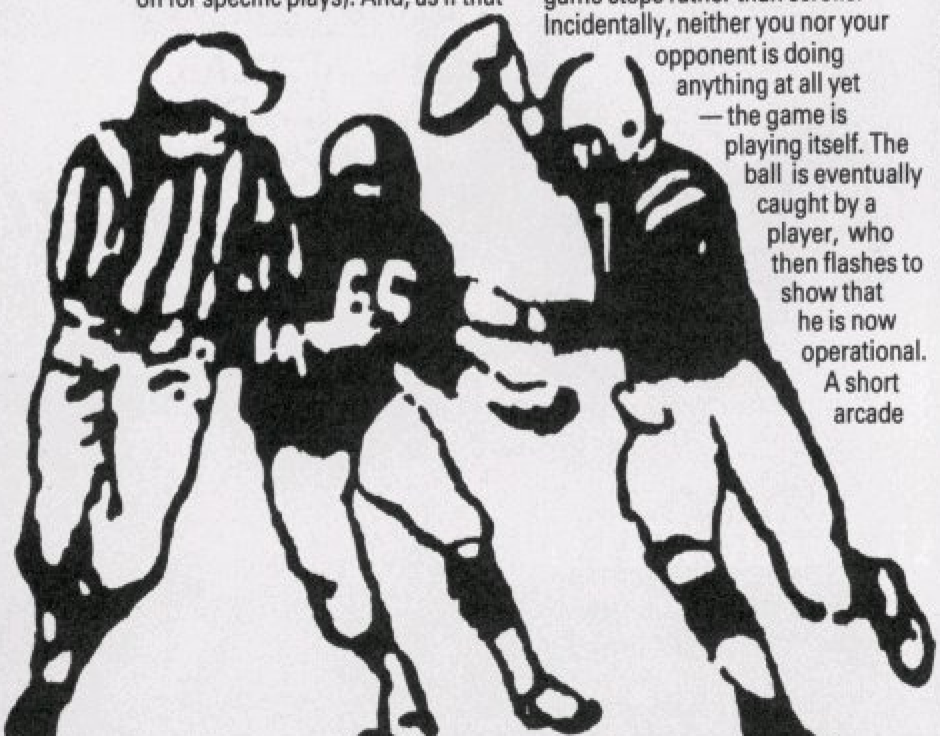
Nick Kelly



Sit back and let the computer have some exercise.



The All-Pros convert their touchdown.



4TH & INCHES	DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
VIDEO	
AUDIO	
TOUGHNESS	
ENDURANCE	
VFM	

CU RATING

5


THE TRAIN
HELP THE FRENCH RESISTANCE, YES.
GET CAPTURED, NO THANKS.
C64/128
THE TRAIN
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IO

Despite many requests Firebird don't seem to want to supply me with a scenario for IO, so I've put my creative talents to the test and written a seven volume novel. Here however (due to limitations of space) is a short precis of its main elements. Shootdahell-outaeverygoddamthing!

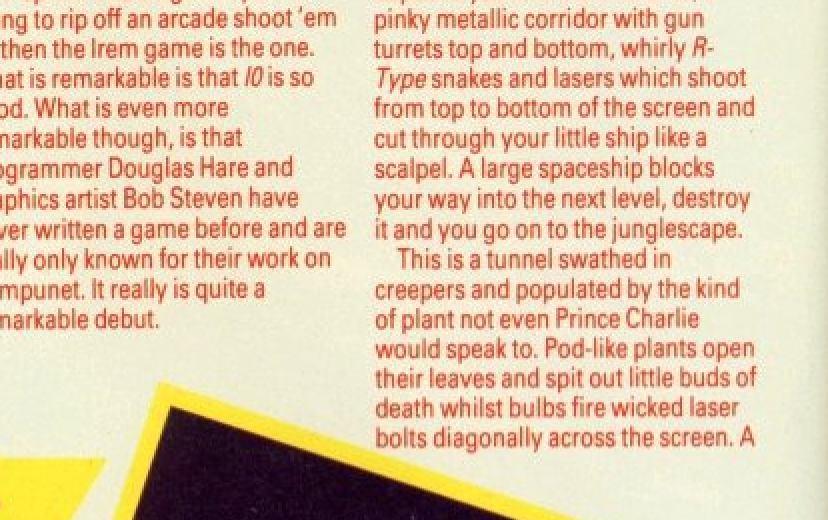
In their own brazen words IO is a "horizontal shoot 'em up in the *R-Type* style". What they're trying to say is that they've ripped the hot coin-op off. There again if you're going to rip off an arcade shoot 'em up then the Irem game is the one. What is remarkable is that *IO* is so good. What is even more remarkable though, is that programmer Douglas Hare and graphics artist Bob Steven have never written a game before and are really only known for their work on Compunet. It really is quite a remarkable debut.

There are only four levels in the game, but they are quite long and when you repeat them they increase considerably in difficulty. They all follow a similiar format with a surface below and above and wave after wave of craft which attack you. waiting at the end of each level is the by now standard extra big monolith of a nasty.

The four levels come in a selection of tasteful colours with a selection of tasteless nasties. A dropship deposits you into the first level, a pinky metallic corridor with gun turrets top and bottom, whirly *R-Type* snakes and lasers which shoot from top to bottom of the screen and cut through your little ship like a scalpel. A large spaceship blocks your way into the next level, destroy it and you go on to the junglescape.

This is a tunnel swathed in creepers and populated by the kind of plant not even Prince Charlie would speak to. Pod-like plants open their leaves and spit out little buds of death whilst bulbs fire wicked laser bolts diagonally across the screen. A

C.U. Screen Star



Cripes! There's an intergalactic space cruiser in your way.



Whirly snake on level one.

Beat this one and you can put your foetus up.



C.U. Screen Star

IO

64/128
Firebird
Price:
£8.95 cass/
£14.95 disk

leering skull awaits at the end of the creeper clad corridor.

Level three is a red lunar landscape where deceptively pretty bubbles float around. Touch them and like your dreams they fade and die. Make it as far as the end and a mountainous rocket launcher pumps huge slices of photon ectoplasm at you.

The final level consists of a matted mess of blue spines which not only cramp you for room top and bottom but hinder your path going forwards too. To complete the circle a massive foetus guarded by another snake confronts you. It takes a whole bank of shots to finish this baby off.

Your only assistance throughout the game is a little extra weaponry. You gain it by shooting small green orbs which appear every now and again on each level. Shooting it once turns it into a gun which when picked up doubles your firepower. Get another and your firepower is tripled. Grab another and a little sphere will attach itself to your wing. You can have a total of two after that the green minty things just give you smart bombs or extra lives.

R-Type is currently under conversion to the 64, but if Activision can do better than this they deserve a lot of credit. Whilst *IO* isn't a complete copy, level for level, it does possess all the elements that made the Irem game such a joy to play. It's a class piece of programming (if a little too difficult) with great graphics and a hugely enjoyable blast. Put Bob and Doug to work on something else quickly!

Mike Pattenden

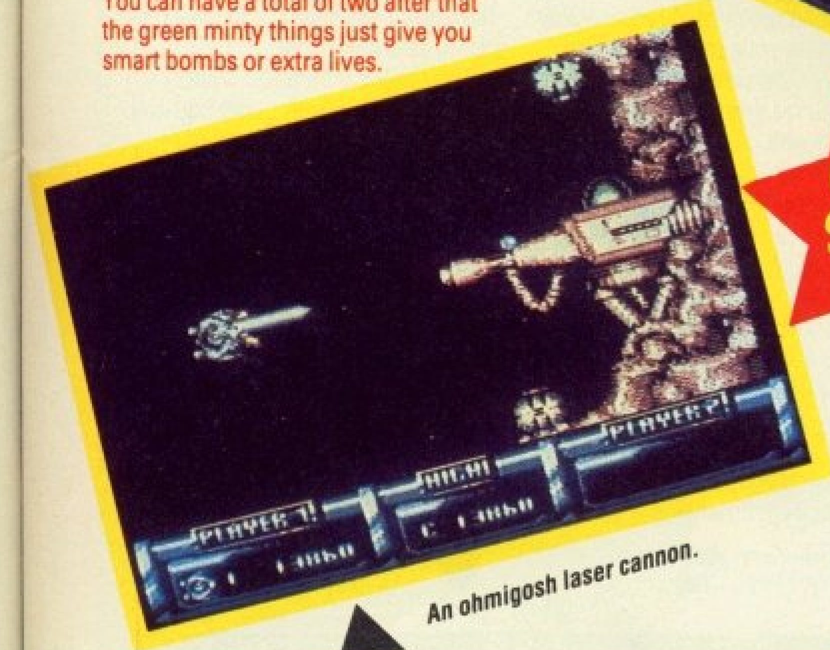
IO — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
VIDEO	
AUDIO	
TOUGHNESS	
ENDURANCE	
VFM	

CU RATING: 8



The skull awaits at the end of level two.



An ohmigosh laser cannon.

C.U. Screen Star



IO COMPO



14 INCH MODEL WITH REMOTE CONTROL

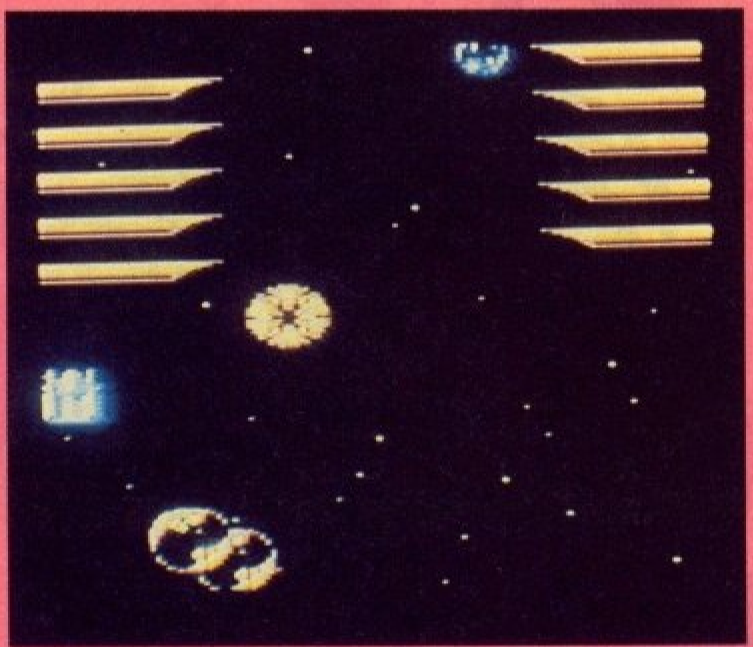
To celebrate the launch of this wowza blast we've conned Firebird into giving away a John Logie Baird box. That's a cute but colourful 14" remote control TV. Win this and you'll never have to unplug the TV in the living room to wire up your computer. And you'll never have to get up to switch over from Football Focus to Saint and Greavsie on a Saturday. You won't even have to get out of bed.

How do you win this? Well since you all loved drawing rampaging monsters so much (we had about a trillion entries for that compo) we thought you'd like to put brush to paper again. You've seen our efforts at thoroughly horrible end of level type monsters on the front cover, and on the poster, now it's your turn to draw, paint, do a collage or whatever of a disgusting sickening alien under attack from a ship manned by the CU Crew. Get the picture? (Ouch) Oh, and there's twenty copies of the game for runners up.

Entries to reach us by March 18th with the winning entry to be reprinted. Send 'em to Vile Alien Compo, CU, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

TASK 3

64/128
Databyte
Price:
£9.95/cass
£14.95/disk



Build up your arsenal (????? — Ed)

Somewhere deep in the psyche of computer programmers resides the memory of Andrew Braybrook. With classics like *Uridium* and *Paradroid* he became the godfather of the shoot 'em up market. And as we all know imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Task III has routines from nearly all Braybrook's oldies. Essentially a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up, *Task III* has near identical sound effects to *Uridium*. Your score is calculated after losing a life or clearing a level on a separate screen with rainbow-hued letters à la *AlleyKat*. When you explode it looks vaguely familiar as well . . .

The story? In the year 6038, a mere decade after the Cappin Wars, an evil emperor from a distant galaxy has invaded the peaceful galaxy of Cybernetica.

You are Prince Tomos (very trendy) the last survivor of the Cappin Wars Rebel Star Fleet, and it's down to you to destroy the evil emperor Colon who resides behind a protective wall of sixteen privately commissioned star systems.

After the game loads your ears get an audio battering of a first rate tune which reminded me of something I might have heard on one of the original Star Trek drama sequences. When you start on the first level you are almost instantly engaged in combat with a large squadron of brightly coloured muver-tamperpers. A novice player at this point might decide to retreat, if so they might notice their ship flips over slightly similar to the one in *Uridium*.

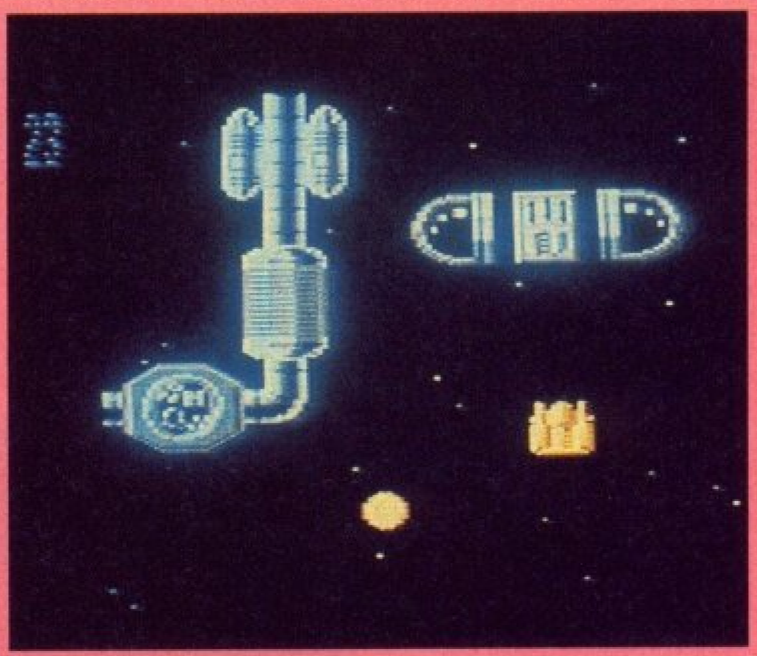
Task III also features the popular additional weaponry. This time you have to fly over blocks to collect and activate the device. If you hang around for a while the block turns to the next highest weapon, but as you have a time limit for each level this can not be recommended as a way to build up your arsenal.

Task III is an inverted shoot 'em up in the sense that you automatically start off with all the additional weaponry. What you can collect is varied, nothing dramatically different, but pretty deadly all the same. To blast with you get a tri-laser front gun, rear lasers, and side lasers. On top of this you get smart bombs and a protection satellite which surrounds your ship destroying anything that gets too close. The next best weapon is the dimension warp which casts you into another dimension, causing all the aliens to slow down while you blast them. And finally there's the Emergency Package: activated by pressing run/stop this gives you all the extra weaponry just in case the going gets too tough.

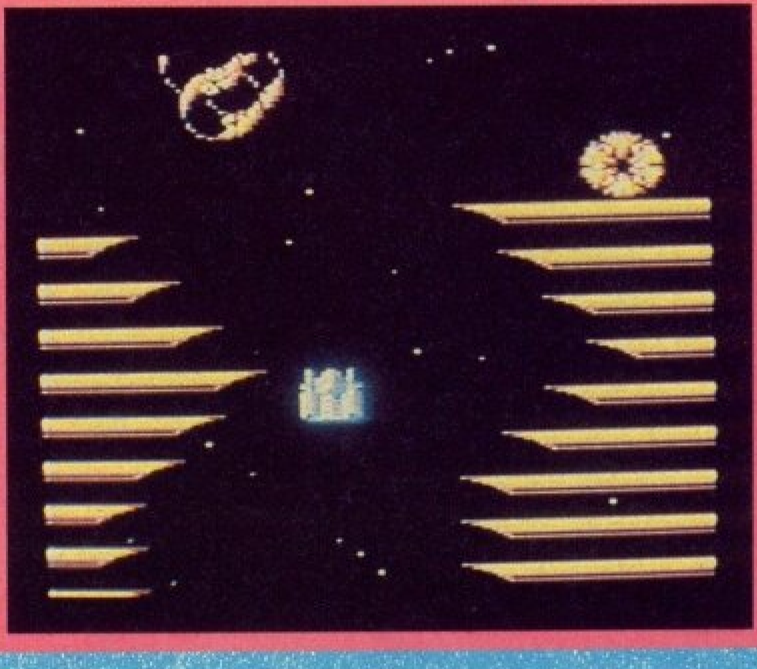
The quality that makes *Task III* a good game rather than the bad one is its addictiveness. It really has to be played to be believed, I'm hooked.

The graphics, aside from a couple of neat enemy sprites, aren't very special and the in-game FX are all out-dated. But *Task III* has the sort of challenge that makes up for its lack of originality.

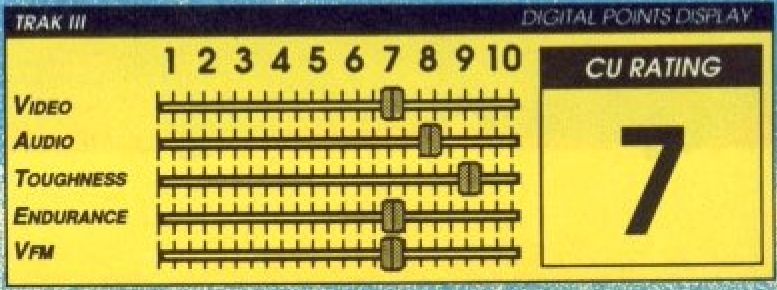
Mark Patterson



Break through Colon's barriers (??? — Ed)



Time for a dimension warp (??????? — Ed).





Let us for a moment tamper with the laws of physics and reduce you down to the size of an atom.

Quite a task you may say, but you didn't count on the help of ANDREW BRAYBROOK, software pioneer and atomic genius.

At first glance, your new universe may seem quite friendly, at least very few of its inhabitants will be trying to kill you, YET. But don't get too comfortable, the longer you're there, the more hostile they become.

You see, you've got to destroy the orbitals surrounding the central nucleus and surprise surprise, orbitals hate being shot at. So they release a fearful array of semi intelligent 'morphs' in retaliation. The longer you take to wipe them out, the smarter they get. They even have the audacity to gain immunity to your weapons.

Not fair I hear you say, but this time you've overlooked the brilliant team of research scientists headed by Professor Braybrook himself, who can be commissioned to build more powerful weapons and systems for your exclusive use. You could become invincible, with an awesome battle cruiser filling over half the screen, AND YOU'LL NEED IT.

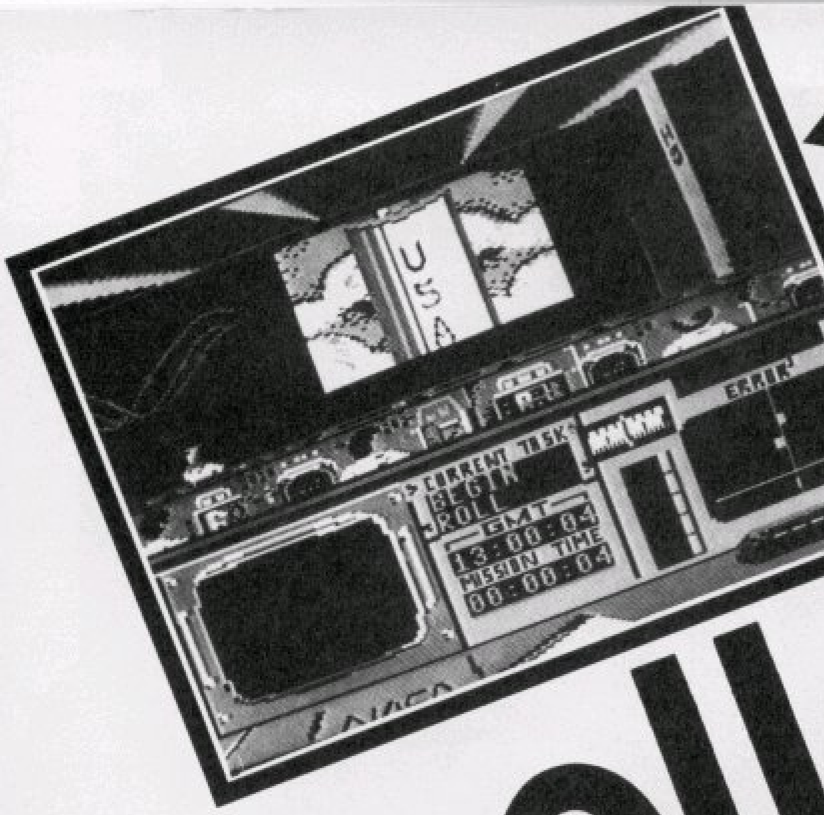
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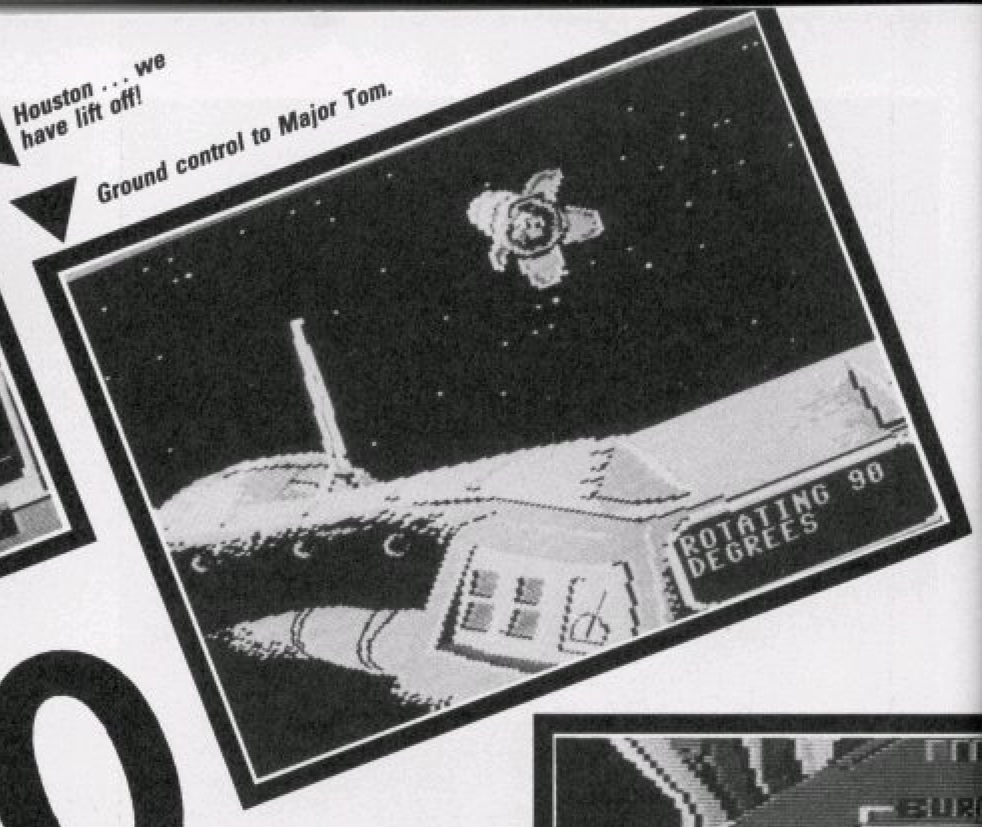
Morpheus is available by mail order. Send your order and remittance to:- The Marketing Dept., Telecom Soft, First Floor, 64-76 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1PS.

RAINBIRD

Telecom Soft, First Floor, 64-76 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1PS.



Houston . . . we have lift off!



Ground control to Major Tom.

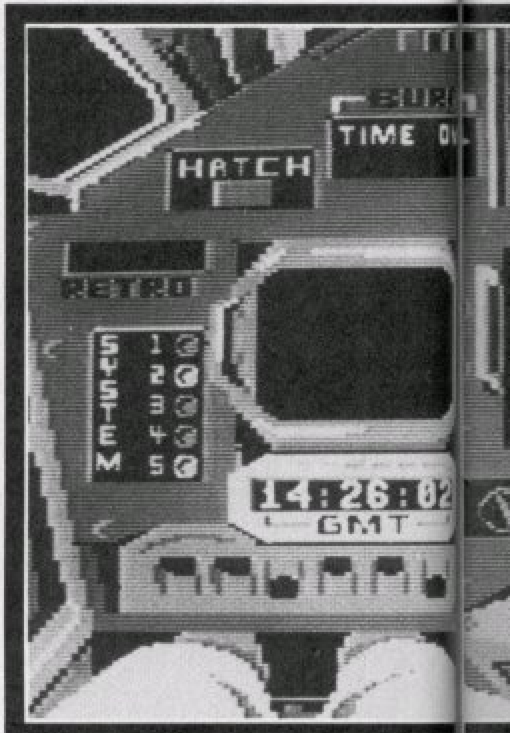
Apollo 18

64/128
Accolade
Price:
£14.95/disk

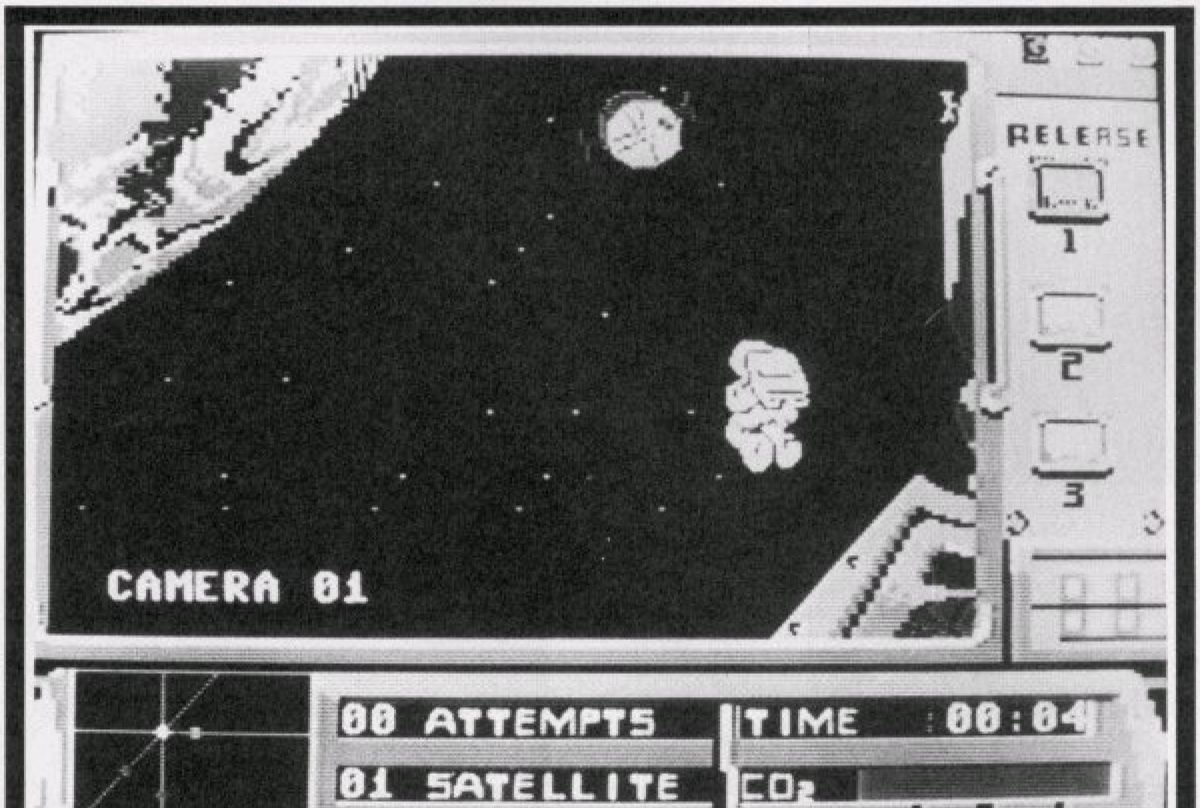
In 1961 President John F. Kennedy gave NASA the task of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to Earth. Seven years later American astronaut Neil Armstrong descended the ladder from his lunar module and with the now immortal words, "one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind", he became the first man to land on the moon. Now with *Apollo 18* it's your turn.

So yours truly the reject from the right stuff donned his white EVA suit and helmet and prepared for launch. The disc drive whirred and clunked a bit then the telly said "Apollo 18 ready for launch." Following this there was some nice pictures, more speech, and finally the game! I pressed the button to start. The computer told me to proceed to telemetry, whatever that was. So back to the instructions. The telemetry screen is like the interlude screen which occurs between most of the missions where you have to switch on bits of your rocket in order not to fry yourself or your crew. Also at later stages you are required to enter a specific program number for the in-flight computer to run. So I switched everything on and went back to the launch screen.

The concept for the launch screen

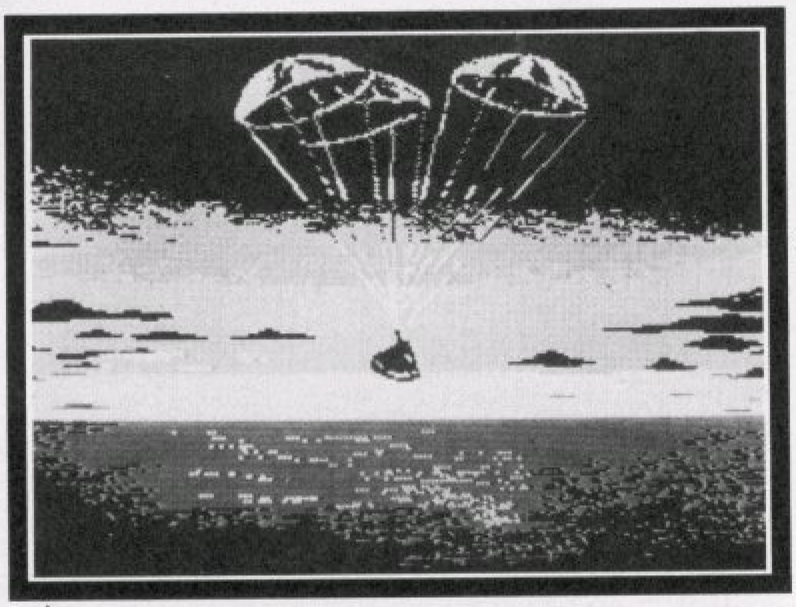


Planet earth is blue and there's nothing I can do . . .

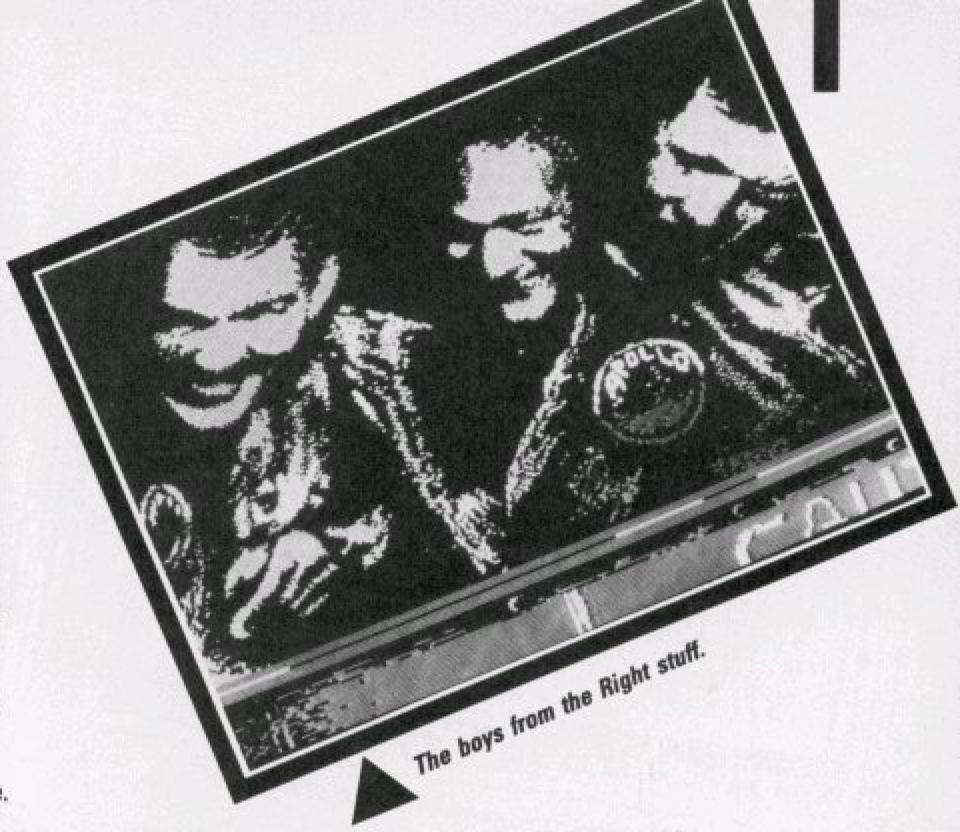




I'm stepping through the door

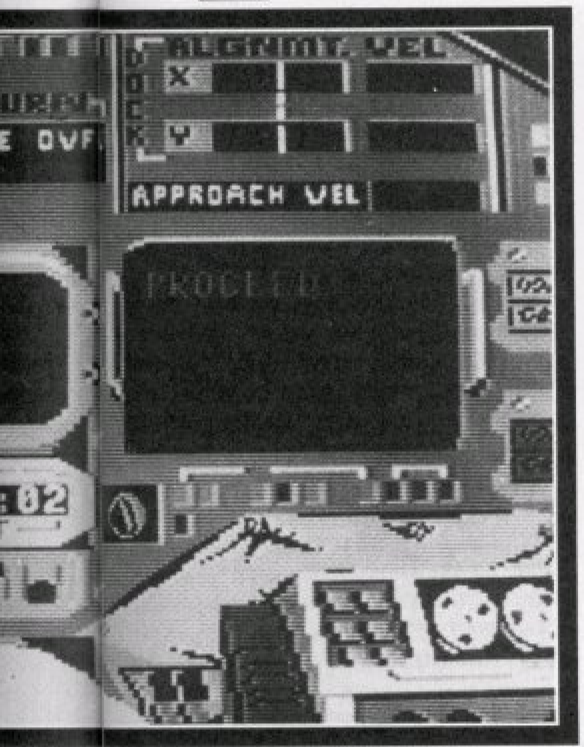


We have splashdown!



The boys from the Right stuff.





e's

is original but it distracts you from all the pretty graphics going on. The display for the level shows half of the screen as instrumentation, the other half the paranoid boffins in the mission control room. In the centre of the room is the view screen which shows your rocket launching at various levels of closeness, and very effective it is too.

When you execute the launch you get more speech telling you the countdown has started and the boosters have been switched on. To control the functions like activating the boosters and ejecting spent rocket stages, there is a small gauge. Every now and again a red bar appears which darts to the other side, you have to press the fire button and stop the bar as close to the line at the centre of the gauge as possible. If you stop the bar too far away from the line the launch will be aborted. You have to do this four times for each stage of the rocket, but on the second stages and above you have a set of left/right giros to control as well. If you let these overshoot more than three times the launch will again be aborted. This may sound easy, but trying to keep a close eye on two sets of gauges while watching the pretty graphic effects and keeping an ear open for the excellent speech is no mean feat.

If you manage to make it out of the Earth's atmosphere, the display changes to that of inside the cockpit, with your legs sticking out the bottom of the screen surrounded by various controls and readouts, with a monitor screen to the right. Then you have to dock with an orbiting space station. To do this you have to run the programs through the telemetry screen, then line up the cross hairs on the small display screen with the target space station. Get it right, go slowly enough and you'll fly straight into the docking area.

The next stage is the in-flight course corrections. This is a wee bitty boring, just wait for the countdown to finish then hold down the fire button until some numbers on a display in the top left of the screen start whirring round, then release. Nothing to it really.

The next stage is to land on the moon. This is rather tricky. You have to guide the lunar module down via a map display. To manoeuvre you have to fire the control rockets in the opposite direction to which you want to go. So to go right you need to pull left and to go left you need to pull right. Then when you get into a satisfactory position, you have to put on the brakes to slow down enough to land. This all may sound easy, but you only get three attempts.

After landing comes the moon walk. You have to reach the Surveyor III and get back to your lander again without running out of oxygen. You pull right on the joystick to pick up speed, and left on the joystick to lean back when you complete one of those funny little jumps. To correct any deviations in your course you can pull up and down on the joystick.

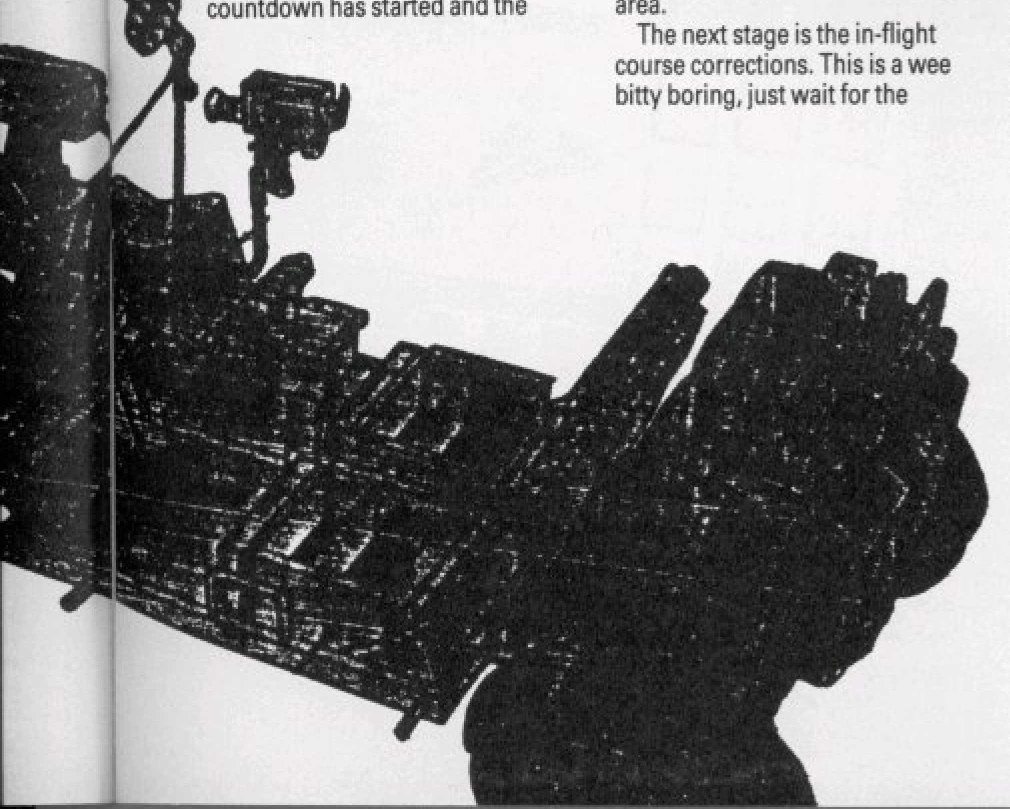
Once you're back in space your penultimate mission is to practise grabbing satellites for repair. You start this mission by pressing fire to release the first satellite. Your outer-space fumblings will be recorded on one of three different cameras. To grab the sattelite, you hae to be in exactly the same dimension as it. What I mean is the stage is played in three dimensions, you can move in and out by using the cursor keys, and you can jet pack around. To aid you there is a special motion tracker, which is very fiddly to use. When you are level with a satellite you must be facing it and be travelling really slowly in order to activate your space hook and grab it. This is the only mission I didn't like, as I found it tedious and too taxing on the mental resources of a weary astronaut.

Finally there is the re-entry. After activating about a half dozen programs you have to complete the task of keeping a crosswire centre on a round ball. Sounds interesting doesn't it? In fact it is pretty hard, as the further from the centre you get, the further off course you go the hotter it gets, if tempeature exceeds five-thousand degrees, you and your men fry.

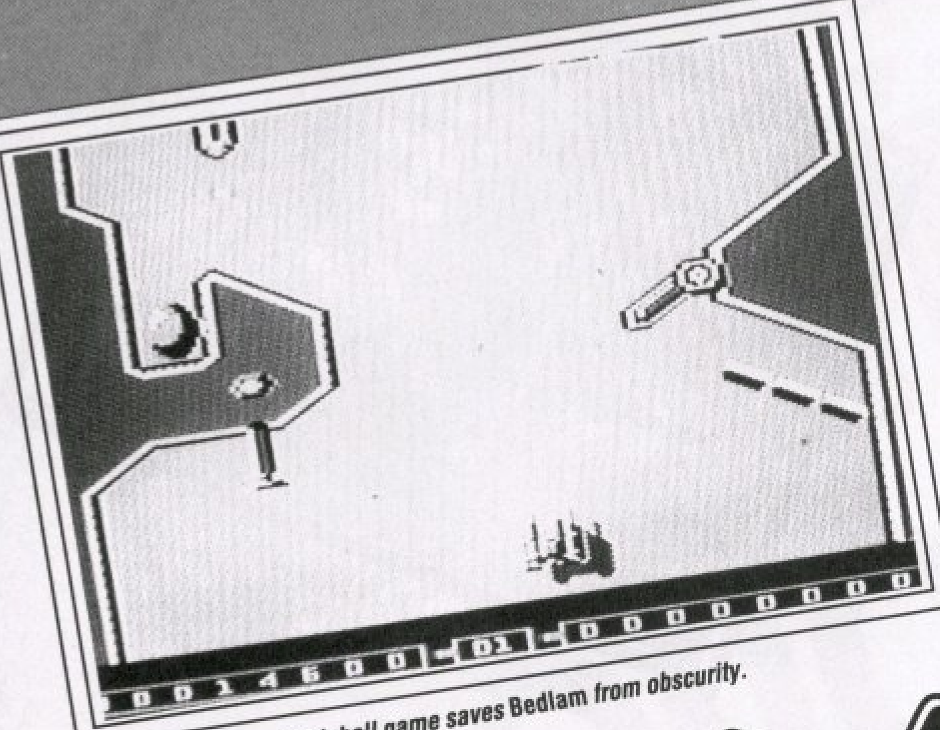
When you complete a mission you are given several neat high-res screens and a lot of speech. If you're lucky you would have splashed down perfectly to the American national anthem, or to mission control saying, "you're way off course Apollo". Either way it's still good.

Apollo 18 is a really great game, it actually feels good to play. The graphics are good with lots of extra touches and special effects here and there which really spice it up. The sound is pretty remarkable, the effects are good, but the speech can't be faulted either. It's not that the speech is very high quality, (I don't know whether it's bad in intended to sound like it's really being broadcast across millions of miles) but there is loads of it. A highly entertaining piece of software which I really liked, not only original but enjoyable too. Definitely one for all you budding Kirks out there.

Mark Patterson



APOLLO 18	DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY (1–10)
Video	8
Audio	9
Toughness	8
Endurance	8
VFM	8
CU RATING	**8**



▲ *Bonus screen pinball game saves Bedlam from obscurity.*

BEDLAM

Since U.S. Gold flooded these offices with literature on their new label GO! they have failed to live up to what we all expected of them. Clearly GO! hope this will be the one to change that . . .

If I were not in such a kind mood, I would say that this plot is about as interesting as watching Holiday on Ice outside a branch of Radio Rentals in Walthamstow whilst it is snowing. I'm pretty sick of all this "Fly your X352.6Mark3warp speed mega-galactic cruiser . . . only you can save the Andromeda interstellar univeral freedom fighters . . . "type waffle. Why can't they just live with the fact all they have produced is another shoot 'em up and just write nothing at all. I could live with it.

Now that's understood it's time to take your ship and waste some extra terrestials. The Aliens come down in formations of around ten. Although they are rather easy to dodge if you're in the right place, once you get caught on the wrong side of the screen, well, that's it. Your ship can move in any of the eight compass points, and fires a rather mundane looking laser. But dodging the ships that fly at you (without firing any missiles at you whatsoever!) is by no means the only problem you have. There are guns, and plenty of them lining each of the seventeen spaceships' surface, these guns fire repeatedly at you, and some of them will even revolve and follow you. Homing bullets are probably the hardest enemy on the the levels that you will have to deal with, these simply appear from nowhere and come hurtling toward you, aiming to destroy one of your three lives.

One of the game's most infuriating aspects is its control. You can move in all directions but when you move sideways you seem to go a lot faster than you do when you go backwards or forwards, which does not do you too much good when are trying to dodge an army of spaceships.

At the end of many of the levels there is a little yellow circle with the letter 't' on it, touching this will send you into what must be one of the most fun bonus stages that I've seen for some time. Your ship is transported in to what can only be described as a mega-galactic pinball table. You must fly through the pinball table and try to keep a ball bouncing for as long as possible. If you do lose the ball you can shoot the bumpers and tokens yourself. If the ball should hit you, you will then be transported to the level which you were previously on. If you survive the pinball wave you will then go on to the next level, and be awarded a hefty bonus.

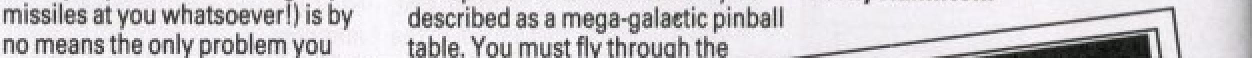
After every four levels you will encounter a mother ship, a very BIG mothership indeed. These are very, very tricky to kill, as they can only be killed when their eyes are fully open. Killing these ships will earn you another hefty bonus, and give you temporary invincibility.

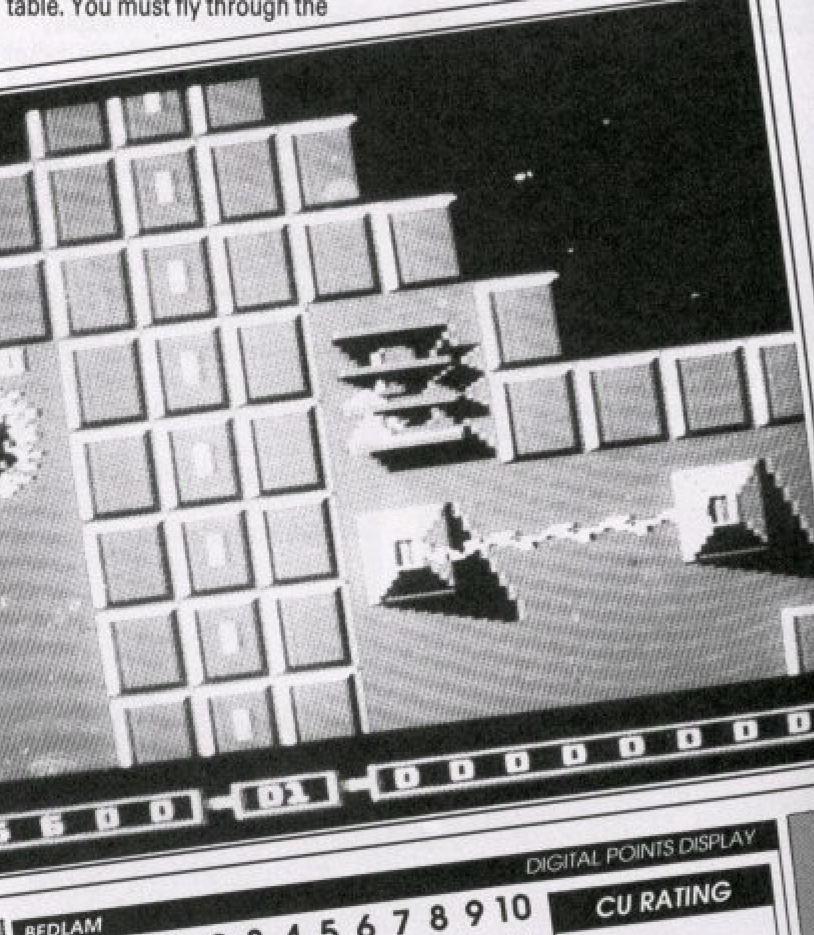
The graphics aren't exactly pioneering but they are a competent version of those seen in most

64/128
Price: £9.99 cass/£11.99 disk

vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups, with realistic 3-D effects, and, a rarity nowadays, smooth scrolling. The sound is rather average, the gameplay can hardly be described as original, but it is a reasonable shoot 'em up. The cute little pinball bonus game makes the package just about worth it.

Ferdy Hamilton.





TETRIS.

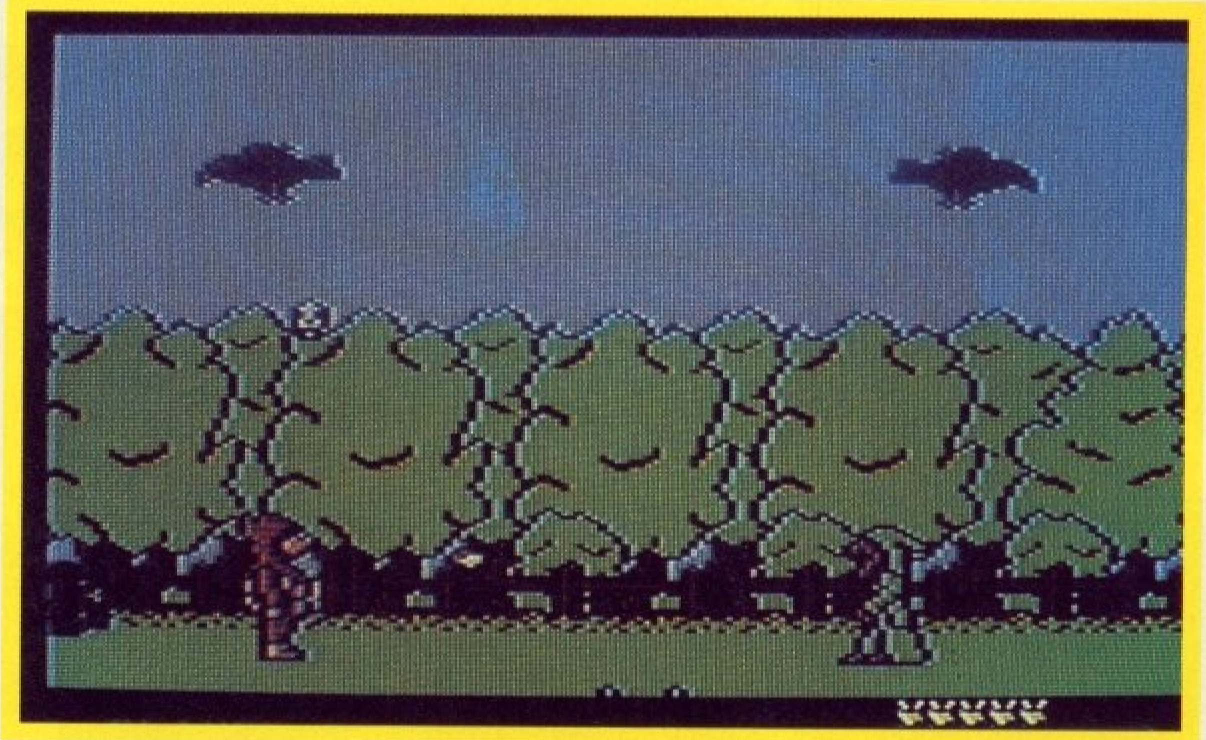


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Jack confronts a witch during his trek through the forest.

BLACK L

64/128
Firebird
Price: £8.95 cass/ £14.95 disk

It's the oldest story in the Book, or one of them at any rate. Young man wants to marry princess. The King doesn't like him and so sends him on a quest. And like all good stories it begins "once upon a time"... so once upon a time there was this jester called Jack, entertainer to King Maxim of Allegoria.

Jack has his work cut out, because the people of Allegoria are well cheesed off. The problem, it seems, is that their lamps have been nicked. Why can't they make do with a candle like everyone else? Well, these weren't just any old lamps you see, they were magic. Ever since their disappearance a plague of evil beasties has stalked the land and people have, on the whole, been fairly miserable. Can't say I blame them.

Local folklore, if you believe in that sort of thing, has it that the lamps were whisked away by dragons, though what they want with them is anyone's guess. Apparently the black lamp is absolutely bursting with magic and it is this one, or rather the lack of it, that's responsible for all the trouble.

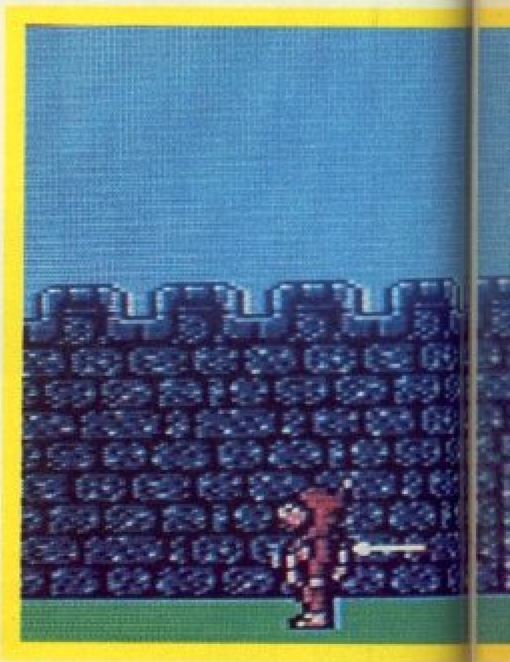
Meanwhile, back at the castle, Jack is doing a midday matinée and *two* evening performances in an effort to keep everyone's spirit up. But the truth is even Jack feels wretched because he has the hots for princess Grizelda. Naturally the King won't let him marry her on account of his not being a prince, not being rich, and being ugly and stupid. So the Cunning King takes Jack to one side and says "You can keep your ugly hands off my daughter... unless you fancy trying to get the lamps back from the dragons".

The King thinks he's pretty smart, and he's right. Jack will probably be killed and that will be the end of the problem. But if he succeeds, the lamps will be returned and having your daughter married to an ugly git is a small price to pay for happiness. Jack is not stupid though, because the first thing he does is go and see his old mate, the king's sorceror, Pratweezle. In return for a few beers Pratweezle conjures up two spells for Jack; one makes his belt buckle fire bolts of pure magic and the other gives him six lives — an absolute necessity for anyone about to star in a computer game.

So Jack sets out to slay dragons and collect lamps, and this is where you take over. The first thing that really strikes you about *Black Lamp* is the music, it really is brilliant, much more sophisticated than anything I've ever heard on the 64. The graphics are quite impressive too.

A duel to the death with a fire-breathing dragon — and all for lust!

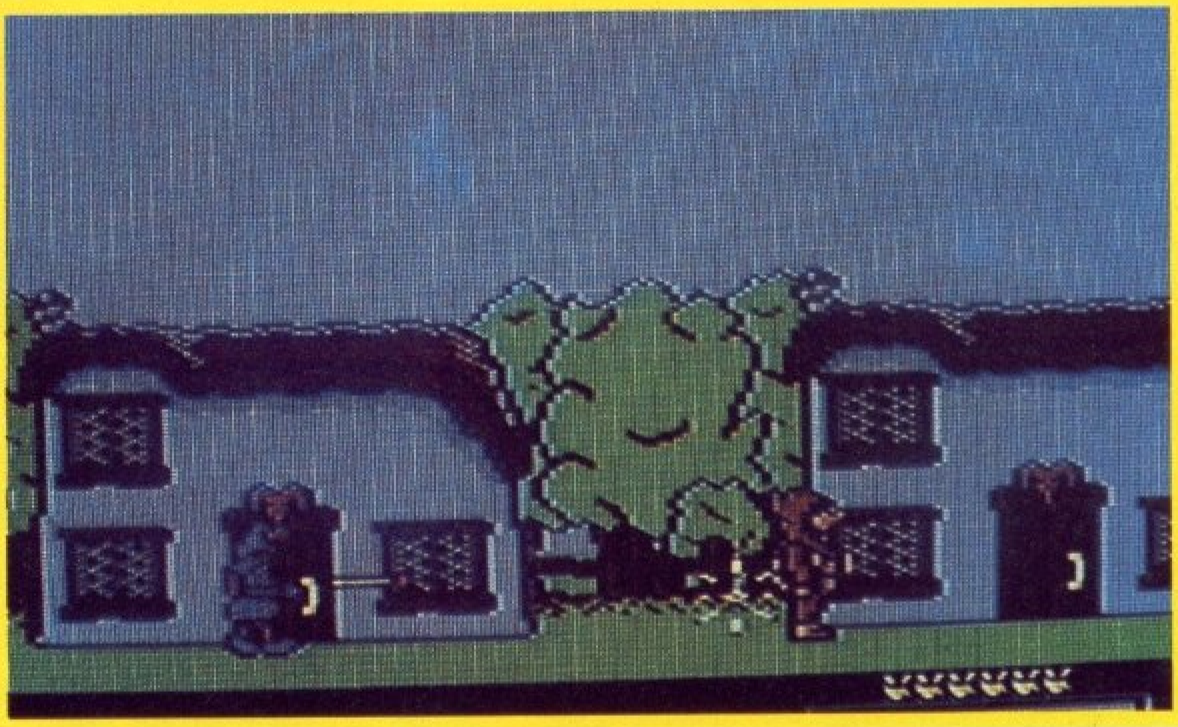




Jack avoids a goblin in the castle grou

The opening screen, which is different almost every time you play, is one of the locations in and around Allegoria. Usually it's an interior scene, and as well as bare walls you will see stairs, a ladder or two, some furniture and the odd ledge. Oh, and some chests. The chests have spaces for each of the nine lamps you must collect, and you must get all of the lamps, including the black one, back into them.

Some lamps are easy to come by, they're just left lying around. Others, particularly the black ones, are

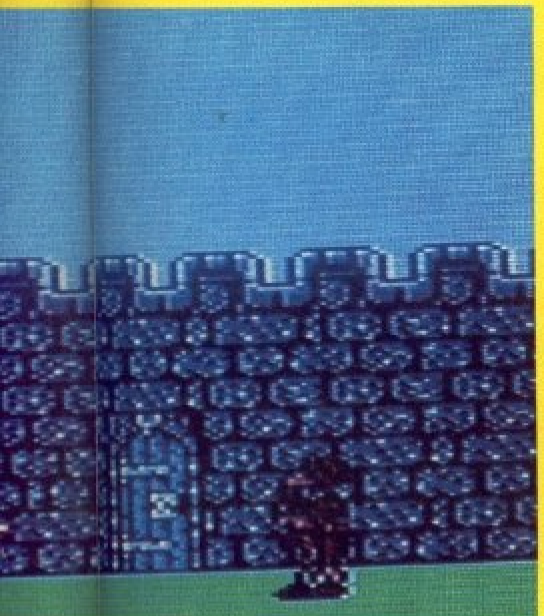


guarded by dragons which you must kill. So it's necessary to do a little exploring. There are two ways out of most interior scenes, to the front and back of the screen. Exits at the back are depicted as doors and those at the front are indicated by a marker at the bottom of the screen. To leave by a door all you have to do is face it and push forward on the joystick. Similarly you can exit forwards by facing the marker and pulling back. You will then find yourself either in another room or outside. Interiors are usually made up of one screen only, the outside, being a much bigger place, scrolls as Jack walks to the left or right. So Jack travels around Allegoria by going left and right and 'in' and 'out' of the screen.

All this would be nice and

He's not afraid — oh no. Jack can take it like a man.

LAMP



e grounds

peaceful, what with the Robin Hood medieval musak, wandering in and out of rooms, up and down streets, through forests and meadows, were it not for the horde of evil beasties that chases you everywhere. Everything that moves is out to get you. From the relatively harmless dragonflies, wasps, vampire bats and werewolves to the relatively wicked slayers and imps, not to mention the crows, buzzards, goblins, witches and trolls that come somewhere in between.

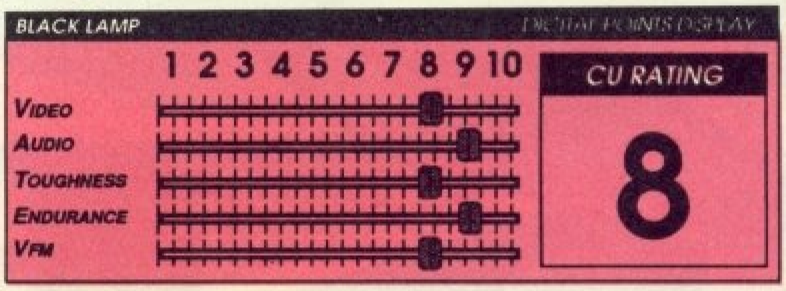
Each creature has its own way of taking a toll on your energy. Crows drop thistledowns on your nut, goblins do it with fireballs, arrows or spears, witches gob on you, then it's back to fire from the trolls and slayers. That only leaves the dragons who, surprise surprise, breathe fireballs, and very accurate they are too.

When you're not too busy getting out of the way of the beasties, or giving them a taste of belt buckle magic you can go lamp hunting. Eventually, if you look hard enough you will find a fire breathing dragon. Drown the dragon in a torrent of magic bolts and, sooner or later, it turns black and expires. The lamp is now yours for the taking, and you can then hot foot it to the nearest chest and deposit your prize. Do this nine times and you're there.

There are one or two things you can do to increase your chances of survival beyond three minutes. Collecting shields makes you invincible for a while, musical instruments increase your bounce factor and swords send your belt buckle into machine gun mode. Without taking advantage of these little bonuses you don't have a hope. One good way of spotting them is by pressing the pause button which makes all the sprites flash.

It's hard to explain exactly what it is like so much about *Black Lamp*. Although the storyline is different and good fun the game itself isn't that original. Nevertheless it is very professionally produced, and has a lot of polish. In terms of design it's faultless and the idea has been implemented very skillfully, maybe something to do with it being an ST conversion. Whatever the reason, it's a winner and deserves to do well.

Ken McMakon



Meanwhile, outside the castle, Jack is having problems . . .





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a soundtrack you won't believe. Rush out and get it before
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excellent addictive and very playable... dual viewpoints stretch
the reactions and concentration to new limits"
Rating: 86% Zzap 6
Commodore C64/128
Cassette £9.95
Diskette £12.95
ENGLISH SOFTWARE
Tel. 061-2563400

DAN DARE 2

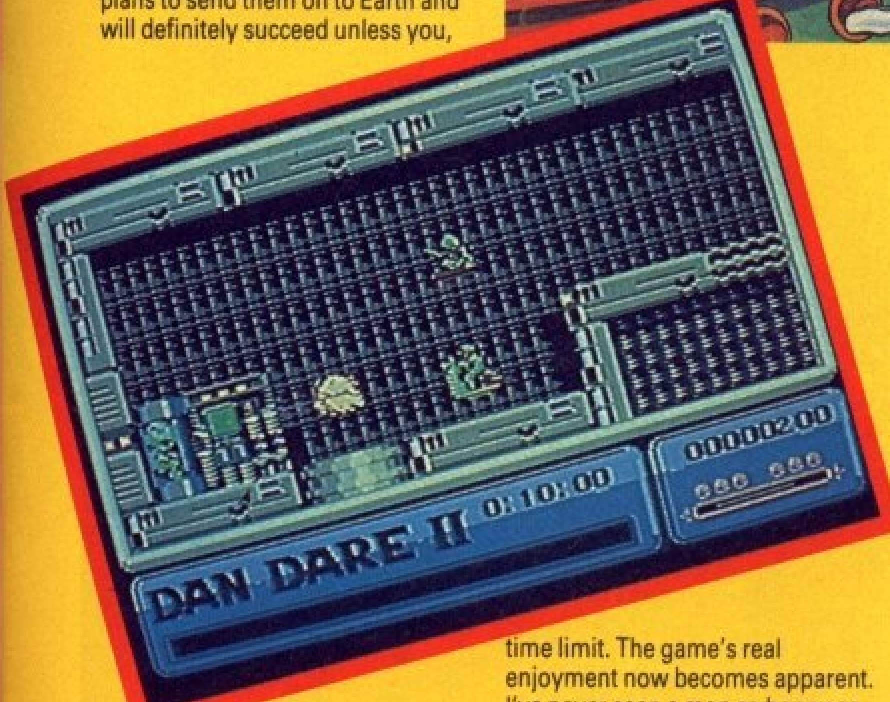




64/128 Virgin Games Price: £9.95



The Mekon (the green one with the extra large cranium) whose sole aim in life is to bring destruction to our home planet (must be a West Ham fan!) has started playing with genes and hormones and things like that (*yeah them kind of fings — Fik Ed*). Now the evil one has created a race called Super Treens, a race of dedicated destructionists. Anyway, the Mekon plans to send them on to Earth and will definitely succeed unless you, controlling Dan, can go and meet him face to face and put an end to his evil.



The game is set out over four levels, each level has six Super Treens being genetically cloned, the fourth and final level has seven. Dan must ride around on his jet scooter, and shoot the life support machines which these wicked creatures are being nurtured. David Alton would not approve — that's why there's a time limit. The game's real enjoyment now becomes apparent. I've never seen a man so happy as adman Scrivo, when he was shooting the Super Treen's foetus thus turning them from Mekon green to a rather sicko intestine red.

Dan has a little trouble initially trying to scoot around on his phallic-looking space moped since the Mekon's ship has the strangest kind of gravity that I've ever seen. You seem to be able to fly around okay, that is until you come to a tunnel, which often decides to suck you in, and send you somewhere that you most definitely do not want to go, such as an interesting garbage chute for instance.

Unlike most run-of-the-mill-bog-standard-average-everyday-mediocre games, this one gives you the chance to play both the goodie and the bad guy. Yes, you can indeed play that green forehead himself the Mekon. When you do you must not kill the foetus of the Super Treens but you must release them before that Slimey ass-kissing little do-gooder Daniel Dare can kill your genetically perfect little creations.

Around the levels there are many little hidden tricks and gadgets waiting to be discovered, useful things such as shortcuts and extra fire power icons are around for those who persevere. The best way to find these is really just to fly around like a pig in a bacon factory, and blast everything that looks blastable.

There are Mekon guards around who will blast Dan's energy down, in the hope of ending one of his six lives. But this method is by no means the only way that our hero can die, and it is probably the least likely to occur. The most common way of dying, in my experience, is through the very ungenerous time limit. Once you have shot one of the Super Treen babies you have then ten "Mekon" minutes, which are about the equivalent of three human minutes, to kill the rest of the evil embryos. Another interesting way of ceasing to live is finding yourself in the garbage room where the walls have this annoying tendency to come together with the result Dan becomes Danish.

Dan Dare II is a very enjoyable game indeed, and nor is it another dose of the original, which is a good thing, (though half of me wishes it was because the first one has to be held as one of the best arcade adventures ever on the 64.) The sequel is a more straightforward challenge but still enjoyable.

Ferdy Hamilton

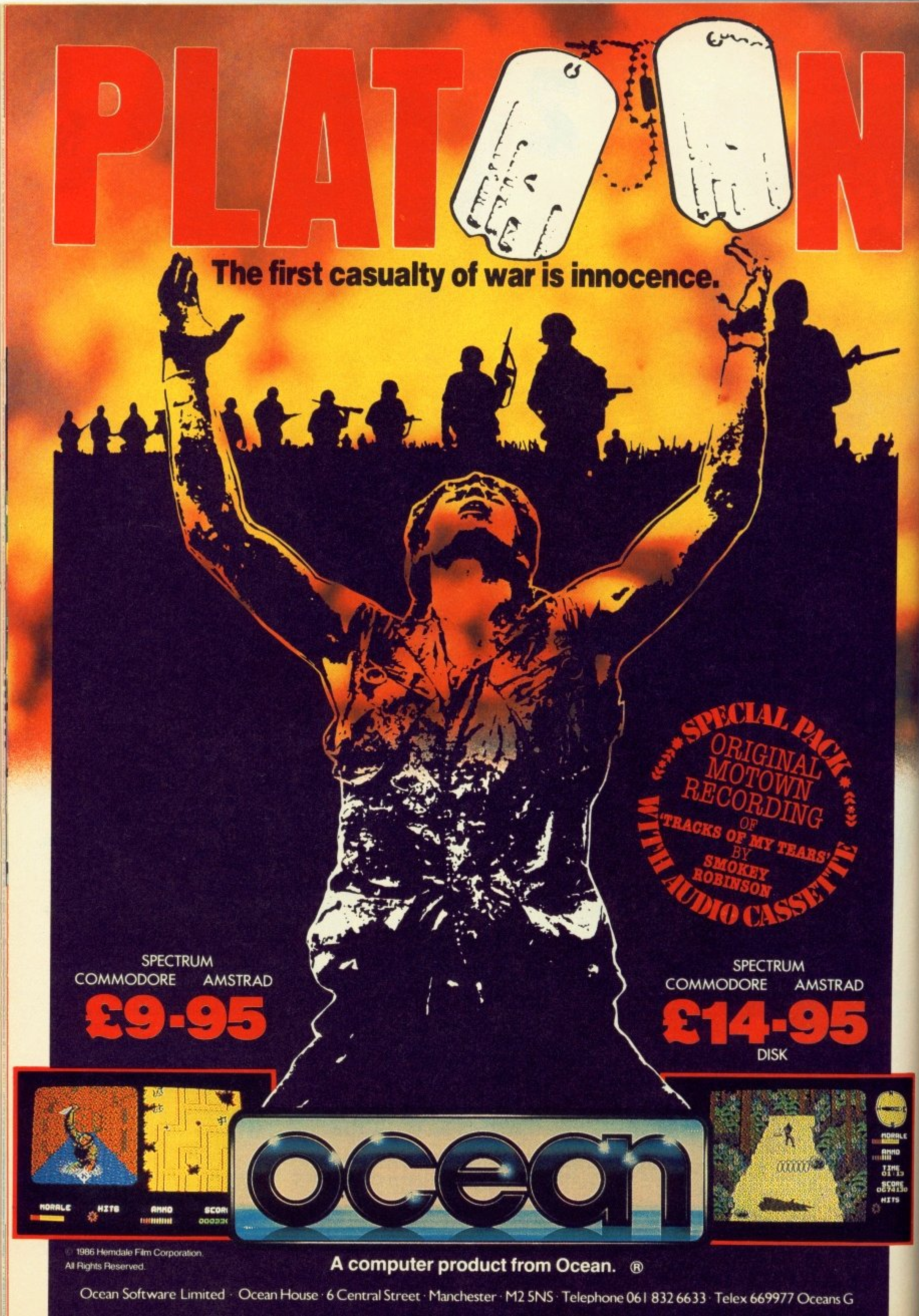
WIN A DAN DARE GOODIES BAG

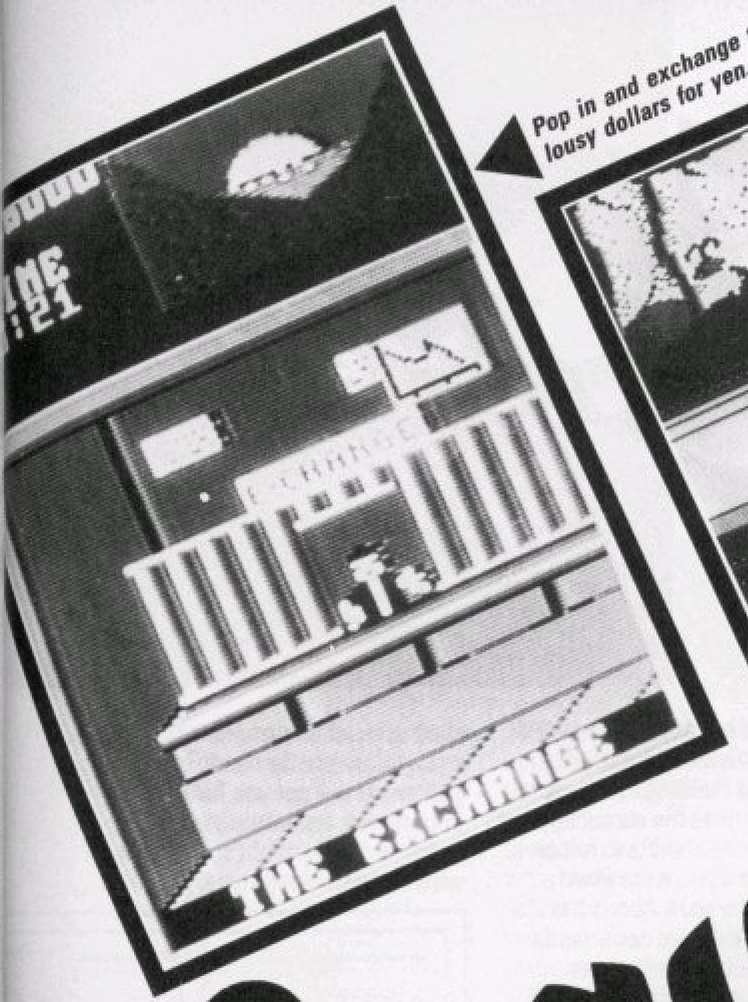
Those generous Virgin people have just come stumbling into our offices with a great mound of loot to be dispensed to five lucky CU readers. Each winner will receive a copy of the brand new Deluxe Collector's Edition of "Dan Dare, Pilot Of The Future", a superbly bound volume plus a Dan Dare T-Shirt, poster, poster-pack and, of course, a copy of *Dan Dare II*, the game. Simply tell us how much you think the cover price was for the first issue of The Eagle all those years ago. Answers on a postcard to Dan Dare Compo, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

DAN DARE II — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

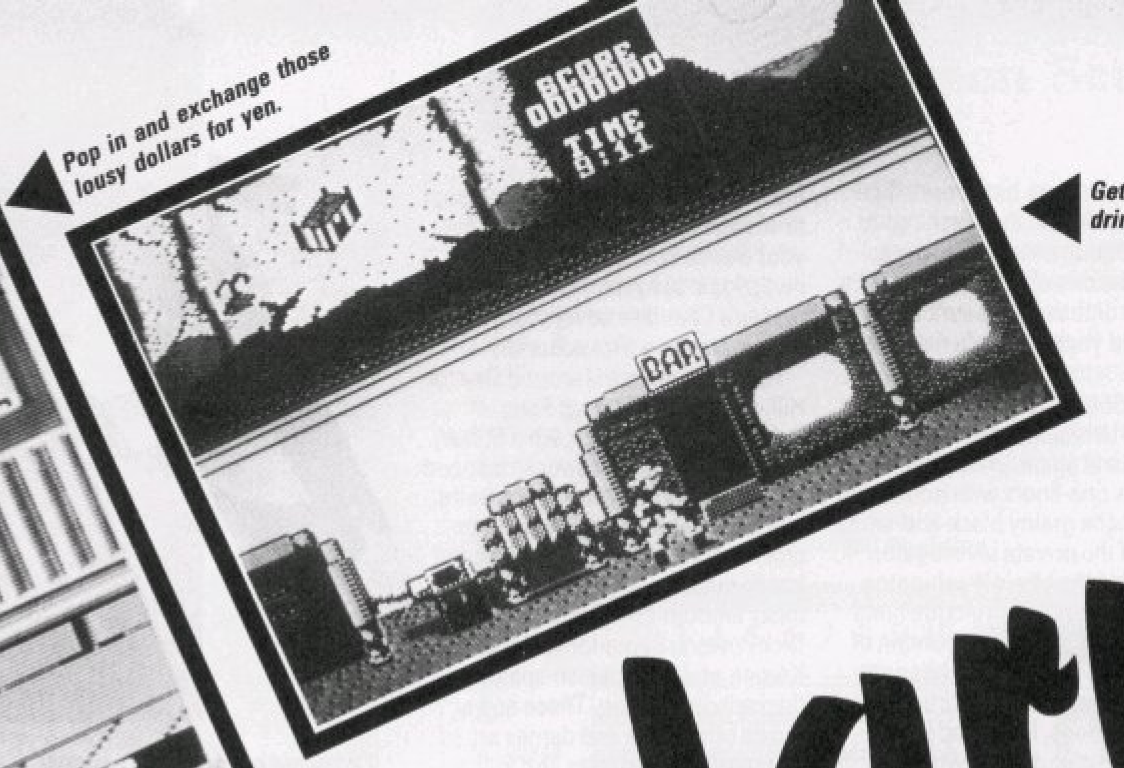
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
VIDEO	8
AUDIO	6
TOUGHNESS	7
ENDURANCE	8
VFM	8

CU RATING: 7


PLATOON
The first casualty of war is innocence.
SPECIAL PACK
ORIGINAL MOTOWN RECORDING OF 'TRACKS OF MY TEARS' BY SMOKEY ROBINSON
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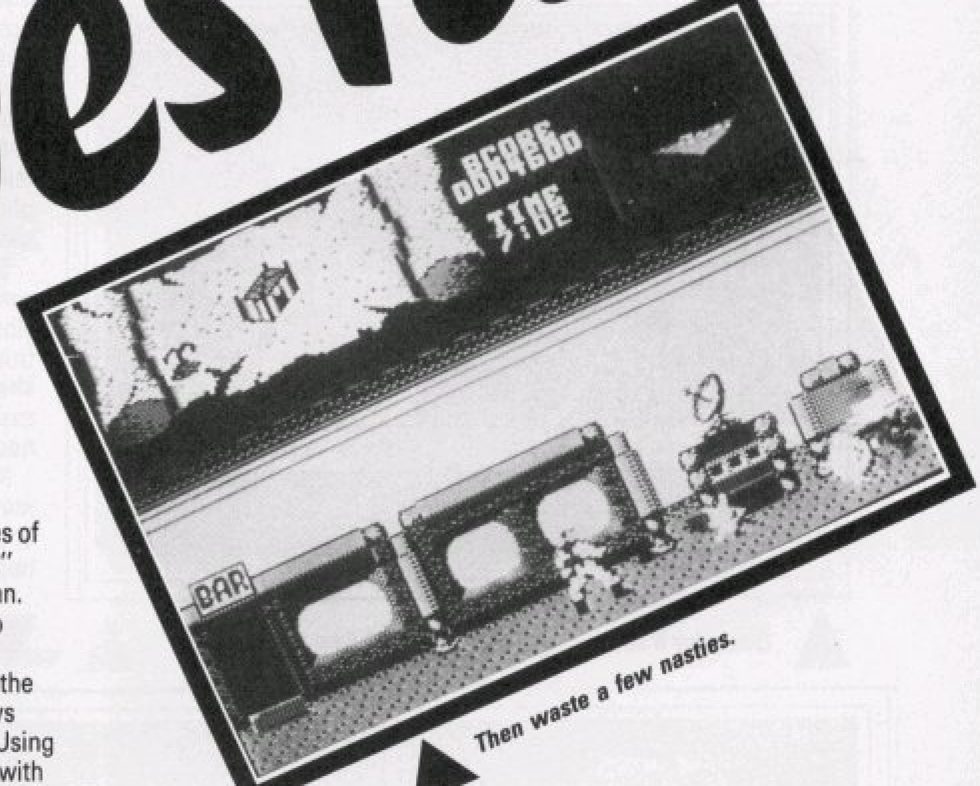


Pop in and exchange those lousy dollars for yen.



Get off your horse and drink your milk.

Bravestarr



Then waste a few nasties.

64/128
Go!
Price: £9.95

This Wild West future shoot 'em up was designed and programmed by Probe — the people who brought you *Out Run* and *Trantor*. It comes with a scene setting story on the inlay that, for want of a couple of extra chapters and a beautiful heroine, could have made a Mills & Boon novel.

The scene is New Texas, where the mines are full of Kerium, the modern equivalent Esso four star. The villain of the piece — Tex Hex and his hordes of evil friends. Wait a minute, shouldn't that be fiends? Well anyway, it's not Tex's fault you see, he is in the grip of the unutterably evil spirit Stampede, who wants to resurrect some dinosaurs and be their king — I know that sounds like a complete load of dino dreck that I'm making up as I go along but it's true, honest.

To be the king of the dinos, Stampede, with the help of Tex Hex, must extract the magic sequence from the ancient Indian, Shamen. "As the courageous Marshal Bravestarr, patrolling the wastes of New Texas, your task is simple."

In other words, save the Indian. Not so simple as it turns out. To begin with, New Texas is a one street town. You're standing in the middle of it and there's bad buys comin' at you from both ends. Using your laser blaster you can deal with most of them. The dogs are a bit of a problem, you'll have to get on your knees, or keep well out of the way by jumping on the roofs of the buildings. But that won't help you avoid the seagulls, black clouds, weightless spacemen and other nasties that operate above ground level.

The first thing to do, not including blasting everything in sight, is enter some of the buildings — the bar, jail and exchange for instance. This gets you away from the action and gives you a chance for a breather. Once inside you have three options; talk, examine or leave. These will get you nowhere at first. There's nothing to see and no one to talk to.

So there's only one thing for it — hop on the saddle rocket. Apart from being pretty good fun its the only way to get to the other locations in the game. The bad stuff follows you, but on the saddle rocket it's easier to manoeuvre out of the way. When you get to your destination, selected with a pointer on an amp, there's a task to accomplish, which might be as simple as picking up a piece of Kerium or freeing some people entrapped by Tex Hex. This is done in the same examine/talk/leave mini-adventure mode as in the town buildings.

As you accomplish various tasks new locations will appear on the map for you to investigate. It's worthwhile heading back to the town every now and then. Things can be exchanged for money in the Exchange and the money can be used to buy information in the bar.

You have to complete your task and rescue Shamen before time's up or you get shot once too often.

Bravestarr is all the more enjoyable because despite the fact that it is full of all the old clichés the wild west idea freshens it up considerably. The graphics are good too — a welcome change from the Uridium-style metallic metropolis that seemingly features in virtually everything these days and at ten bucks, you won't have to sell your horse to buy a copy.

Ken McMahon

BRAVESTARR — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

8

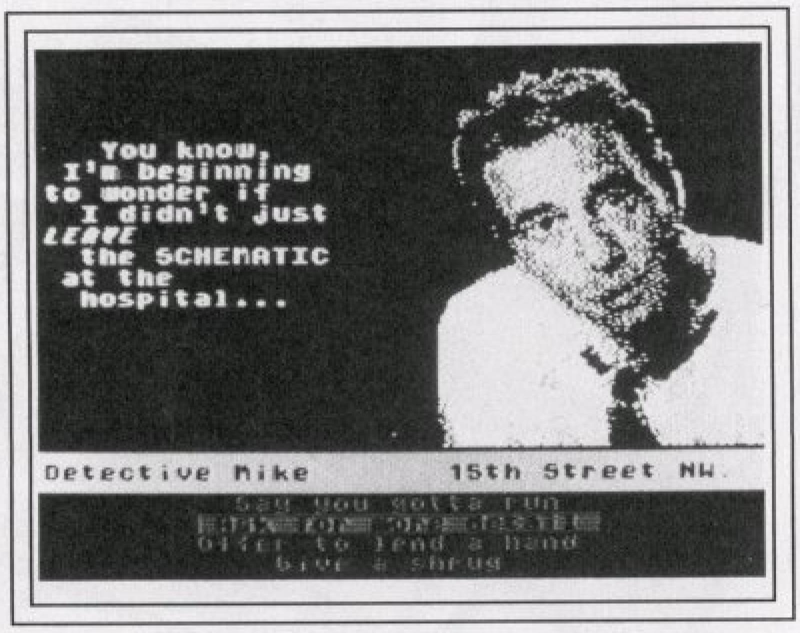


As you stare out of the office window at the Washington Monument you know it's going to be one of those days . . . It's been one of those days ever since you joined your brother's detective agency".

And it doesn't take a Philip Marlowe to realise that we're back in shamus land again, swapping smart-ass one-liners with hoods and broads in the grainy black-and-white lowlife of the private investigator.

This time the city is Washington DC, and the lengthy prologue finds you slumped behind a mountain of unpaid bills, reading the cheering news about stolen killer viruses, nazi demonstrations, Reds-under-the-bed paranoia and Third World power muscle-flexing. A couple of mysterious phone-calls, and a folder full of notes and Polaroids, are about to change all that, and reaching for your trench-coat you set off to investigate a mystery so devious it makes a Chandler novel seem about as complex as a *Sun* editorial.

As you gumshoe it around Capitol Hill, searching Potomac Park, Independence Avenue, 23rd St NW, and 5th & Florida for your kidnapped brother Joe, you bump into a weird, wonderful and decidedly suspect crowd of characters. There's the knock-out blonde Lisa Rothschild, nasty smooth-talking FBI official Dick Powers, Bogie-lookalike Mike Kruger, and the Spanish-speaking taco vendor Estefan. These and a dozen other guys and dames are to be found on the streets and in the bars, hospitals, embassies and warehouses of the city.

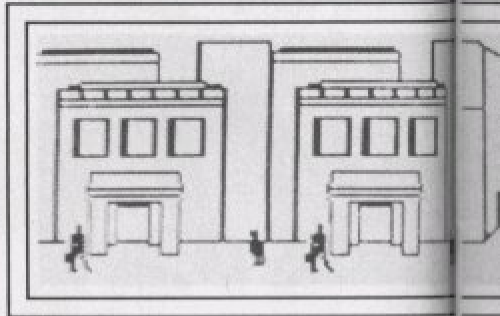


Erm, play it Sam . . .

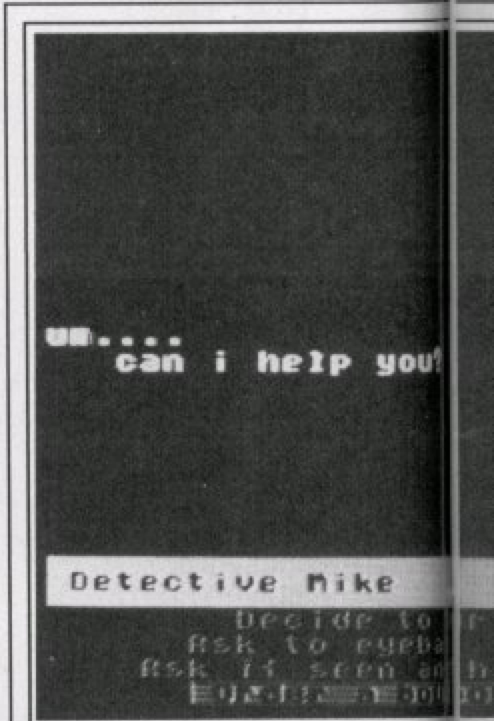
The game employs unusual 360° panoramic views of the streets, avenues and building interiors, so that as you move the cursor keys or joystick, the view shifts to left or right, just as if you were slowly turning on the spot. Above the location window are commands informing you of the options available — you can search, walk, talk to passers-by, hail a taxi, use a phone, or enter buildings and rooms.

Once you decide to button-hole someone, the view changes to a close-up portrait of the character in true *film noir* style, with effective shadows and animated facial expressions which react to your questioning.

Most characters won't reveal much the first time you talk to them, and you'll soon learn that often a non-commital shrug or nod will elicit as much information as a straightforward demand. Tact and politeness will get you further than impatience; and while inviting a dame to dinner might sometimes win her over, it might just get you a



Don't be put off by outside graphics.

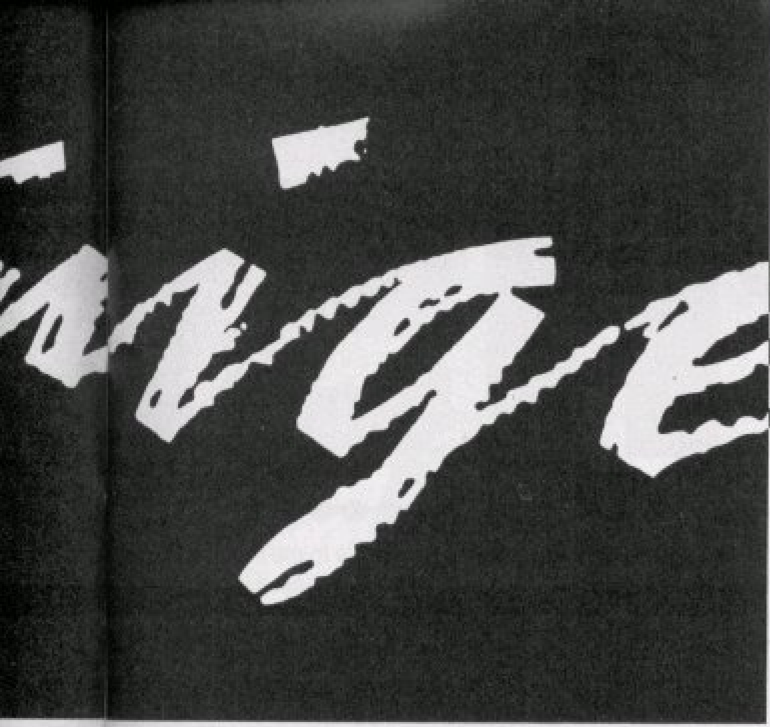


Pop into B+B's Bar for a bourbon.

Well, you never know your luck . . .







verbal slap in the mouth. Bribing the FBI guard gets dramatic results, and rubbing Moe the bum up the wrong way lands you in hospital with a lacerated face.

There are three skill levels to the game, but even on the easiest it's horribly difficult to cut through all the lies and false trails to find Joe's whereabouts and the key to unlock the door. And then there's the PF13 virus bomb itself, which can only be defused successfully if you've managed to pick up a schematic somewhere along the line.

From the skilful scene-setting of the beginning to the tense countdown of the finale, the tortuous plot has a grip like araldite, and if you succeed in solving the whole caboodle, next time it's an entirely new ball game, with different liaisons and alliances to sort out, new motives and different clues. Sometimes only one character is guilty, sometimes it's a conspiracy, and sometimes one person can be another in disguise!

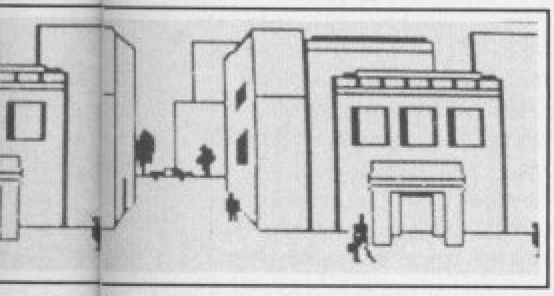
If you grow tired of solitary sleuthing, you can team up or compete with friends, each controlling an individual 'tec in turn, trading info as necessary. And if you decide to choose the Female option, you'll find that suspects act quite differently, the men occasionally responding to feminine charm just as the women can be buttered up by macho male snoopers.

With black-and-white graphics which range from the adequate to the atmospheric, dialogue which crackles with ambiguity, wit and veiled threat, and a scenario which moves along at speed (despite frequent disk access) *Intrigue!* is the most polished and absorbing game.

With its multi-player option, male and female interaction (!) and, apparently, 2000 plus possible solutions, the game kicks the stuffing out of any upstart 'tec adventure within spitting distance. A classic.

Bill Scolding

INTRIGUE	DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY (1–10)
Video	8
Audio	5
Toughness	9
Endurance	10
VFM	9
CU RATING	**9**

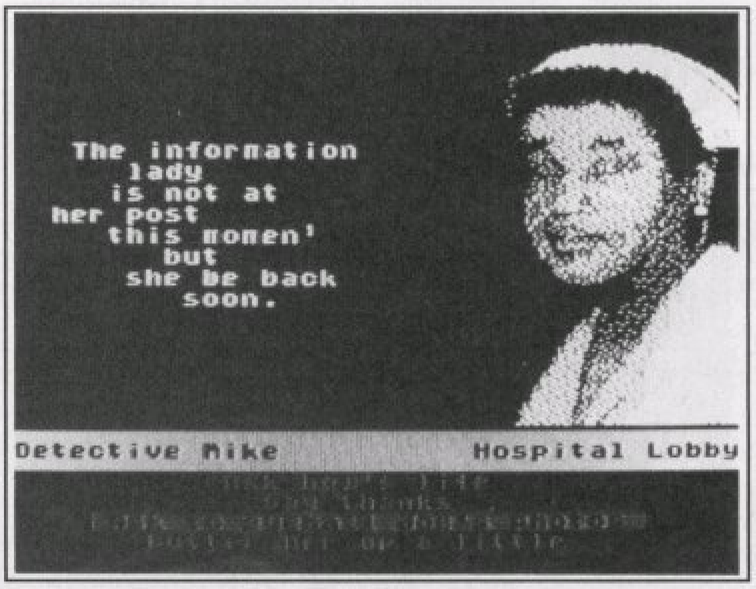


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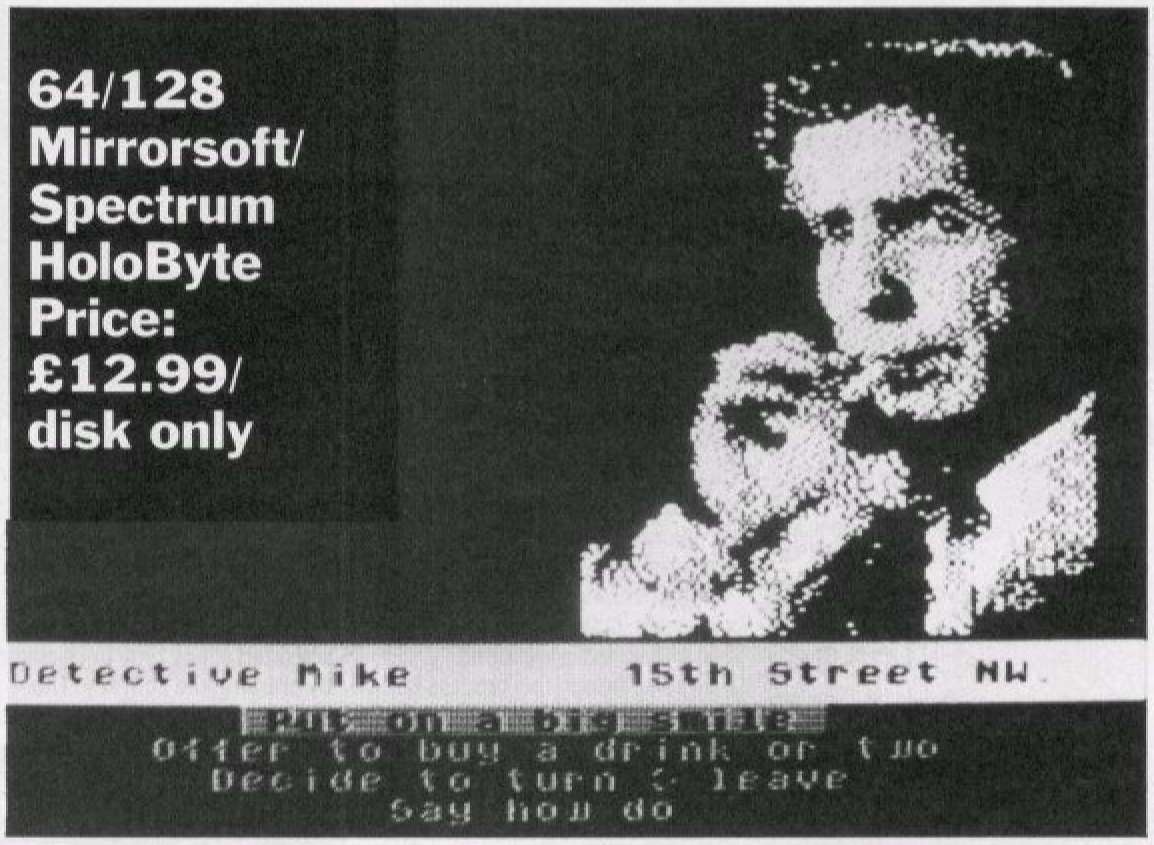
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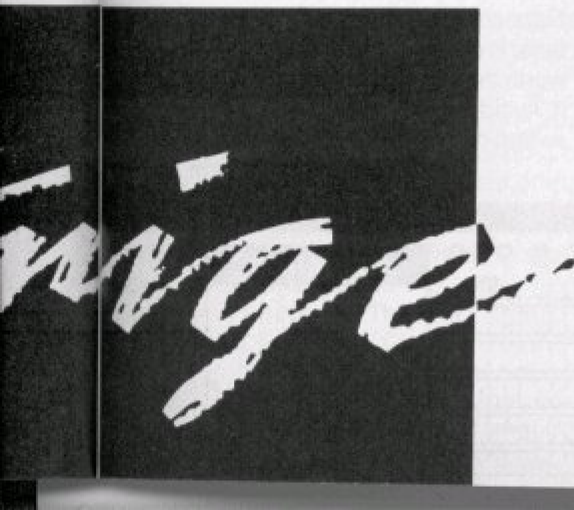


▼ *Funny, Kruger bears a passing resemblance to Bogey*

▲ *The nurse may well have some info.*

64/128
Mirrorsoft/
Spectrum
HoloByte
Price:
£12.99/
disk only





side arms

In *Side Arms* you play Lieutenant Henry, setting out to rid the blue planet of the dastardly Bozon, blasting your way through a multitude of strangely similar attack waves, trying not to succum to the boredom of the inter-level loading. The classic enemy is the end of the level guardian; a mere blob the size of your character's head, which just spews out the wimpish attack craft you just spent a level destroying.

The biggest piece of baloney connected with *Side Arms* has got to be the back-of-the-package hype which claims it's 'classic shoot 'em action'. I think I'd rather a game of classic Invaders than waste any time on this. Yet another mickey take on the packaging states 'brilliant graphics'.

The one thing *Side Arms* does present in its favour are the selection of extra weapons available, though this process is now becoming very dated. After blasting an alien you are initially left with a POW sign. Shoot that a couple of times to transform it to three way fire which lets you fire at three different angles. Blast the three way a few more times and that becomes a mega laser, here the game falls prey to the old syndrome of bad sprite detection, your tiny little laser will destroy anything it hits and then carry on, but it also destroys everything within a distance above and below it. I doubt very much if this is supposed to happen, it doesn't look very much like it was intended to. The next weapon is rear fire, which fires at two angles out the back of your space suit. This has to be the most valuable weapon as the aliens fly toward you then double back and try to ram you in the botty. Some times you can collect a weapon called auto, which is a rapidly spinning sphere which spins round your man firing off random laser bolts.

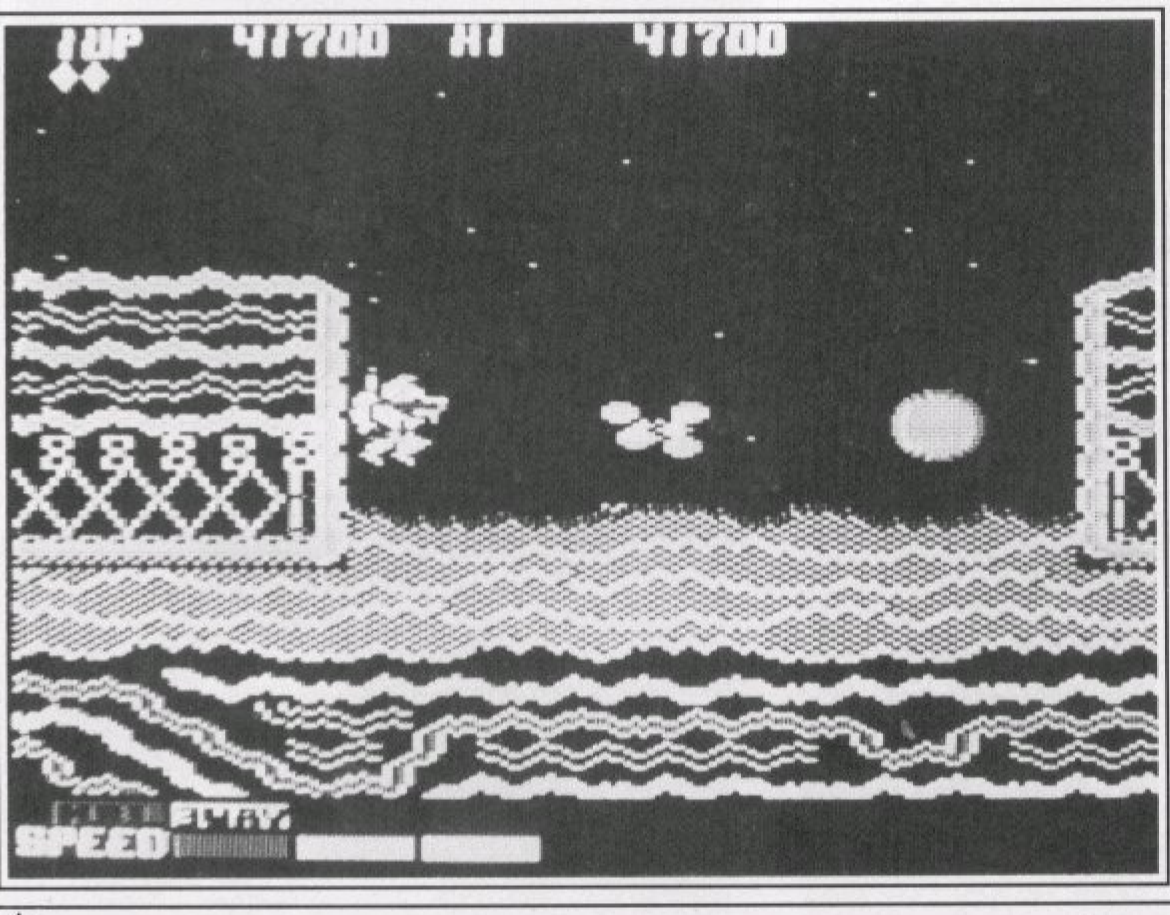
Any of the weapons can be activated at any time once collected by pressing the shift key. There is also alpha and beta beams which sounded pretty deadly to me though I never managed to find any. If you collect the POW symbols as they stand your laser speed increases, you can do this four times. But if you shoot the POW symbols too much they revert into WOPs which make you lose speed when they're collected. As well as weaponry you can collected things like cows and strawberrys, it beats the hell out of me what they're doing in the middle of a full scale inter-galactic war anyway. But that's stellar life.

The shoot'em up doesn't have a divine right to be good. Some shoot 'em ups can be bad. This can be caused by bad gameplay, bad graphics or bad sound. So *Side Arms* has a little multi-load (like every level) but other arcade games are multi-load too aren't they? *Side Arms* has bigger problems — like a screen that attempts to scroll at the speed of a C5 in first gear (and that's slowwww), like graphics which are lousy and repetitive, like enemy sprites which buzz about devoid of ferocity, which when they are replaced by a different type of nasty, follow exactly the same paths as their predecessors.

Shall I go on? the backdrops are are amazingly monotone, spotted blocks line the ground surrounding slowly wavering lakes, occasionally a little man will appear, wave his equally small fist at you and submerge again. The sonics are equivalent to listening to Roger Whittaker's greatest whistles played at half speed — not very pleasant I can assure you. But most important of all *Side Arms* is nothing like *Side Arms*. The arcade version was fast moving and it could hold your attention for at least a couple of quid, but couldn't hold my attention for a femtosecond.

Side Arms is really a classic case of a game which could convert to 8 bit machines but is badly done. And this is a *bad* conversion, a sort of *Nemesis* with a geezer and an outboard motor strapped to his back. Pretty abysmal and not even worth the slightest notion of buying it. Avoid this like you would avoid a swarm of rabid African Killer Bees.

Mark Patterson



▲

64/128
GO
Price: £9.95 (cass)
Price: £14.95 (disk)

SIDE ARMS	DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY (1–10)
VIDEO	3
AUDIO	3
TOUGHNESS	2
ENDURANCE	2
VFM	2

CU RATING
2





Screen Shot taken from Atari ST. Screen Shot taken from Atari ST. Screen Shot taken from Atari ST.

Are you prepared for the adventure of a lifetime?

Dare you switch on "The Black Lamp" and begin your journey through the enchanted land of Allegoria?

You'll need plenty of courage and cunning, to fight your way through an evil host of superbly animated characters and animals.

Skull dropping buzzards, evil eagles and spitting witches do their utmost to stop you in your quest to find the enchanted lamps, and ultimately The Black Lamp, guarded by the wicked dragon.

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Out now on Spectrum Cassette £7.95, Amstrad Cassette £8.95, Disc £14.95, C64 Cassette £8.95, Disc £12.95, and Atari ST Disc £19.95.

FIREBIRD

A LEGEND IN GAMES SOFTWARE

Telecom Soft, First Floor, 64-76 New Oxford St, London WC1A 1PS.



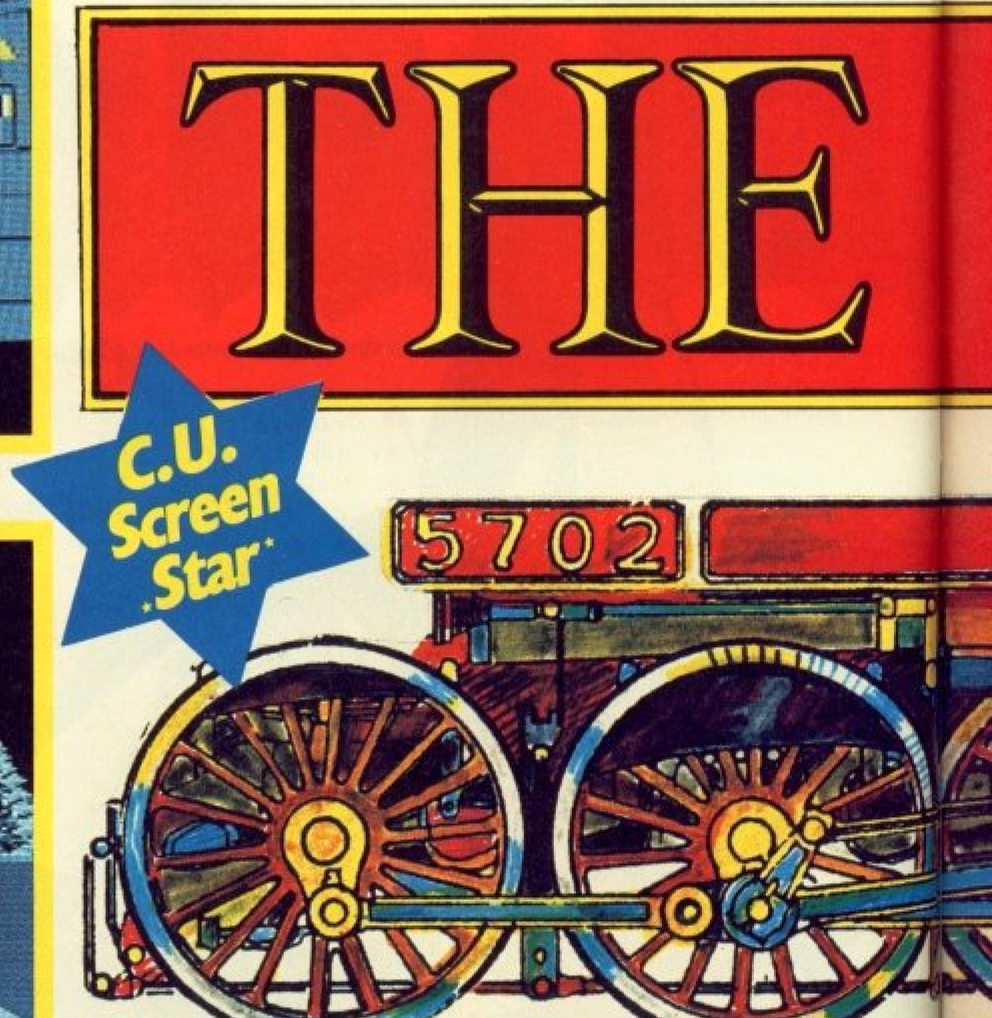
Before you go anywhere you've got to steal the train.



Dakka, dakka dak eat lead monsieur boche.



Dit, dit, dah, dit — means nab a station s'il vous plait.



THE TRAIN — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

8

It's August 1944 and occupied France is on the verge of liberation by the advancing Allies. The Germans have decided to call it a day and are planning to leg it with the contents of the Louvre and one or two other trinkets, just for old time's sake. Whilst the 1944 Mercedes staff car was acknowledged to be one of the roomier models, squeezing in most of art treasures of France was thought to be pushing it a bit. So the Germans decided to load up a train with as many Renoirs, Pissaros, Monets, Gaugins, and all the rest (god I'm so cultured) that they could pile onto a train.

This is where you come in. You are Pierre LeFeu, a member of the Resistance. With your comrade, Le Duc you must steal the train and its priceless cargo and head West to meet up with the Allies at dawn in Rivière. On the way you can expect help from your Resistance comrades, but for the most part the success of the mission depends on you.

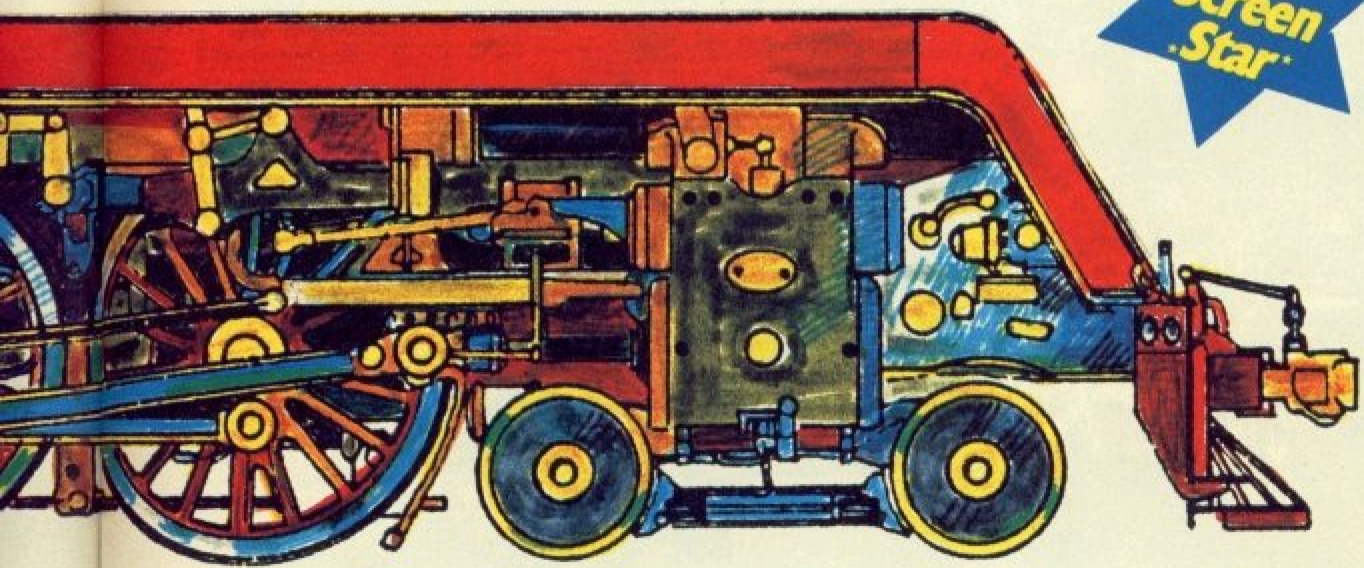
The adventure begins at the train station in Metz — as good a place as any to steal a train. Le Duc must make his way to the train under enemy fire while you cover him. German soldiers appear at the yellow lit windows and you must return their fire. The whole thing takes place at night incidentally. Awaydays were just too risky. Under cover of your fire, the shadowy figure of Le Duc boards the train and it's time to leave.

At this point the disc drive grinds into action as it does several times during the game. Whilst the short wait doesn't interrupt the action and spoil the fun, I can't see it working for cassette users unless they're very patient. After the short break you find yourself on the footplate. In front of you are the engine's instruments — pressure, speed, temperature, the furnace, throttle, brake, steam blowoff, whistle, forward/reverse lever and, lastly, the cab signal indicators. It sounds, and looks, like a lot to cope with, but in less than ten minutes I was steaming along.

Starting is a doddle. Just open the furnace door, shovel in some coal, take off the brake, open the throttle and you're away. Everything is operated by the joystick. Moving left and right selects a lever, pressing the fire button and pulling/pushing

64/128 Accolade Price: £9.95/cass £14.95/disk

TRAIN



C.U. Screen Star

operates it. Check out how to stop at this stage, before you get overconfident!

Not all the action happens on the locomotive footplate. While you're in motion the chances are you will be attacked by fighter planes. Switching view to the front of the train allows you to shoot down the incoming fighters, if you miss you can get them from the rear. Alternative screens provide a map showing your position and enemy/ resistance control of stations and bridges. The pause button gives details of your score, damage to the boiler, brakes, and Old Masters and the number of requests you can make from the Resistance.

How do you make requests from the Resistance? You have to stop at a station. You can of course run through stations, but sooner or later you will have to stop to take on coal and water. The form is much the same as at the beginning of the game — Le Duc heads for the station while you cover him with the machine gun. Once the station is taken you can use the telegraph to send messages to the Resistance. The options are *take next station, take next bridge,* or *make repairs.* You will get a return message telling you what time the station or bridge will be taken at or the location at which the repairs can be made.

It's actually not too difficult to take the bridges yourself. You stop the train, wait for the diskdrive, then blow about half a dozen boats out of the water with the old up/down/left/ right cannon. As with everything else of course, the boats can fire back and any damage to the cargo is irreparable.

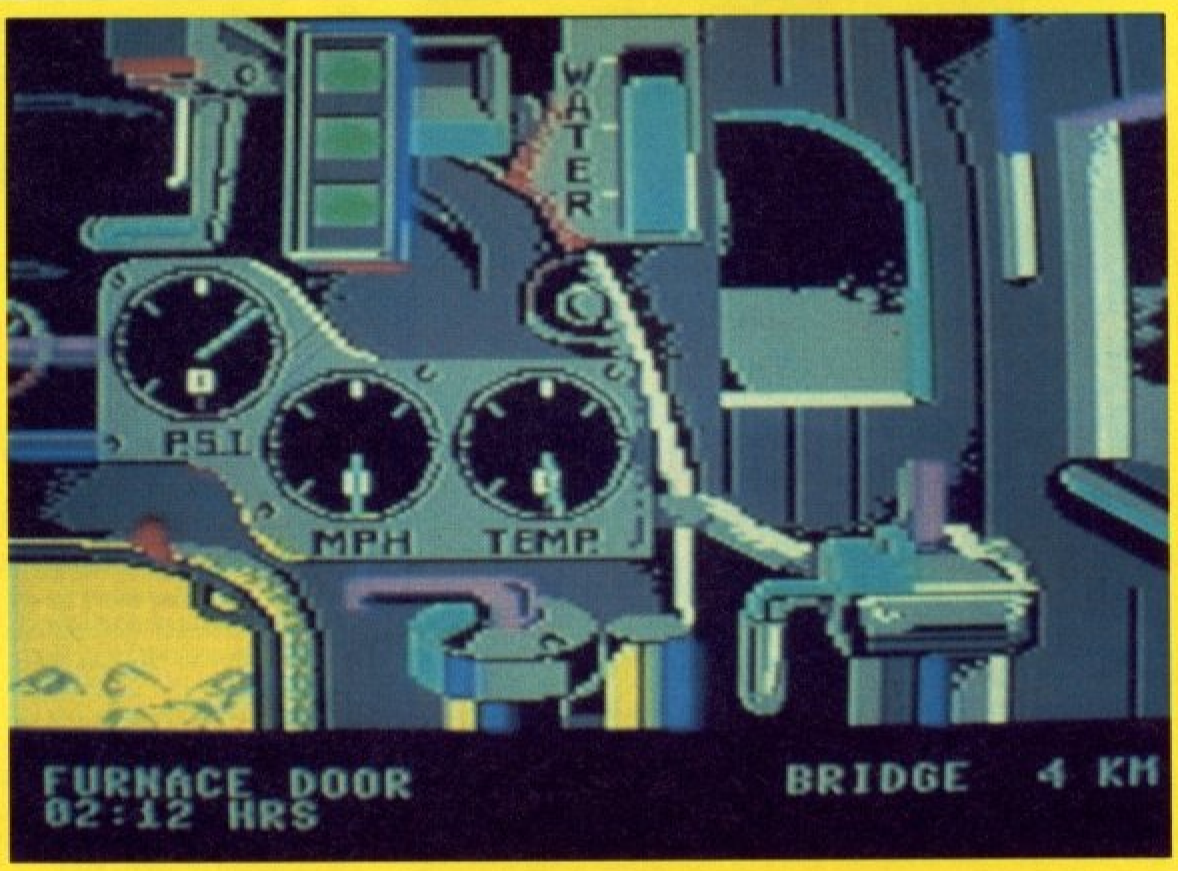
And that's the way it goes, drive the train, shoot down the planes, bomb the boats, capture the stations, get to Rivière. Oh, I almost forgot. You also have to signal the Resistance with the whistle so they can change the points and you don't end up in a siding at Crewe. Apart from that it's all down to tactics. You must try not to sustain too much damage, make sure you can get it repaired if necessary, keep the pictures safe and get there on time. The game is over if you get too badly damaged, if you get shot, or if you accidentally shoot Le Duc.

The Train bears many similarities to Accolade's other wartime classic *Ace of Aces*, and whether, when it's transferred to cassette, the game will be gutted like its predecessor, remains to be seen. It is fantastically good fun, even if you're not particularly turned on by trains or wartime adventures.

Ken McMahon



Stop off and shoot a few Nazis.



Stoke that boiler with fuel.

ORIENT EXPRESS



AWAYDAY

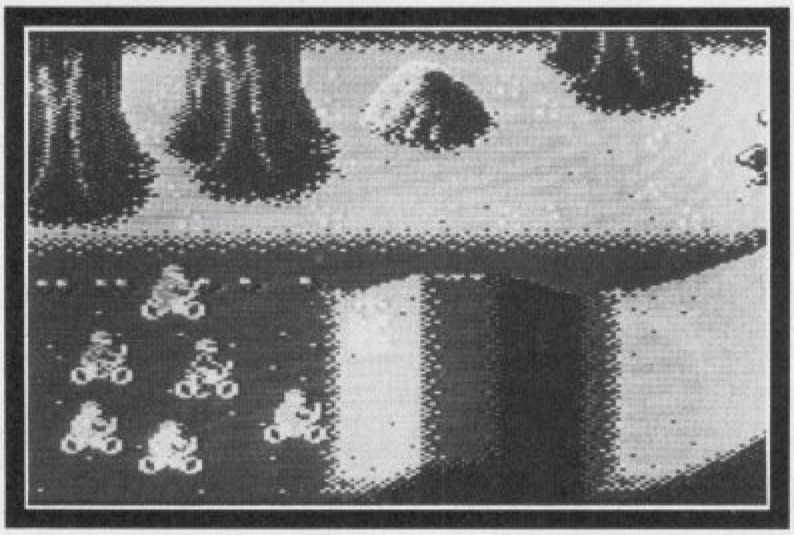
To celebrate the release of their nailbiting TRAIN-ESCAPE TO NORMANDY, Electronic Arts have decided to donate a most splendiferously wonderful prize to a lucky CU reader — a very special train journey. You won't be armed (unless your definition of "arms" includes knives and forks), and you won't be required to drive the train yourself. You will be asked to choose from an array of distinguished locations dotted about this green and pleasant land. Then you'll be asked to sit back, relax, eat, drink and be merry for a unique journey back in time — you're going for a trip on the legendary Orient Express.

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Of course we'll arrange for your transport to and from London in order to take up your prize. So how are you going to grab yourself this memorable slice of nostalgic high life? Simple — just answer these simple questions below, send your entries on a postcard to Train Escape Compo, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU and hope your name is drawn first. Oh yes, and the twenty-five runners up will each receive a copy of TRAIN ESCAPE TO NORMANDY (please state whether disk or cassette is required).

Now for the questions: what are the names ordinarily used for—

(a) the London Underground Train system; (b) the New York Underground Train system; and (c) the Paris Underground Train system?



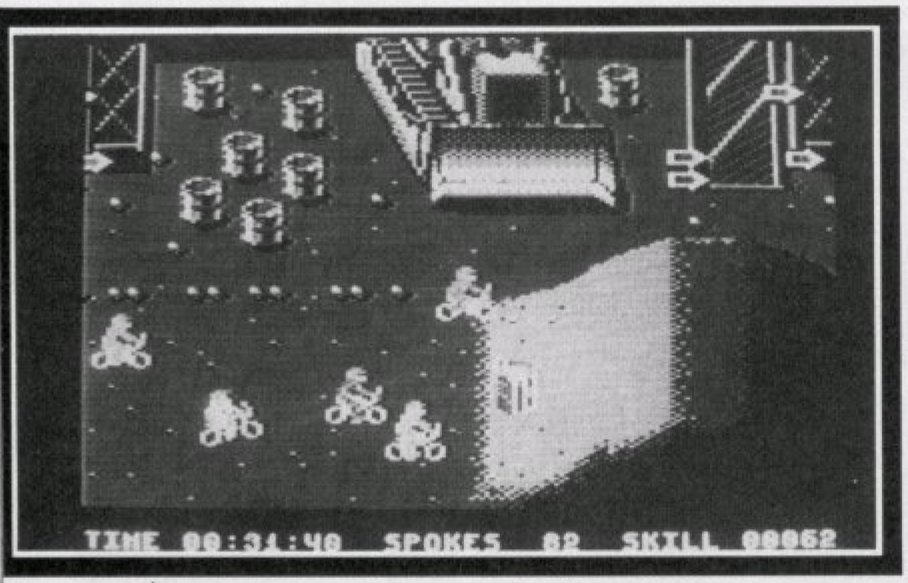
BMX Kidz

64/128 Firebird Price: £1.99

In the beginning was the Word, then came Mastertronic's *BMX Racers*, then *BMX Trials*. Now Firebird jump on the bandwagon a mere three years after it's stopped rolling with their radical *BMX Kidz*. This time it scrolls horizontally and looks like something out of *Excite Bike*.

What advancements are there from the previous BMX games, I hear you scream? Well, none really. The scrolling and the backdrops are quite nice. Move your miniscule bike over ramps and flatlands, wheelying and stunting. The sound FX are very poor and sound like hacked up shoot 'em up noises. The saving grace is Rob Hubbard's title music which is definitly worth a groove to, and you get digitised speech as well.

There are five levels and one for practice. The practice track requires nothing more taxing than finishing in the first four, while the other tracks require a certain number of wheelies and stunts to be completed before you finish the course. It's only a pity that you are rather



▲ ***BMX boys go wacky . . .***

limited in what you can do. Unlike *California Games*, you don't fall off of your bike once in this game. You just lose a lot of spokes.

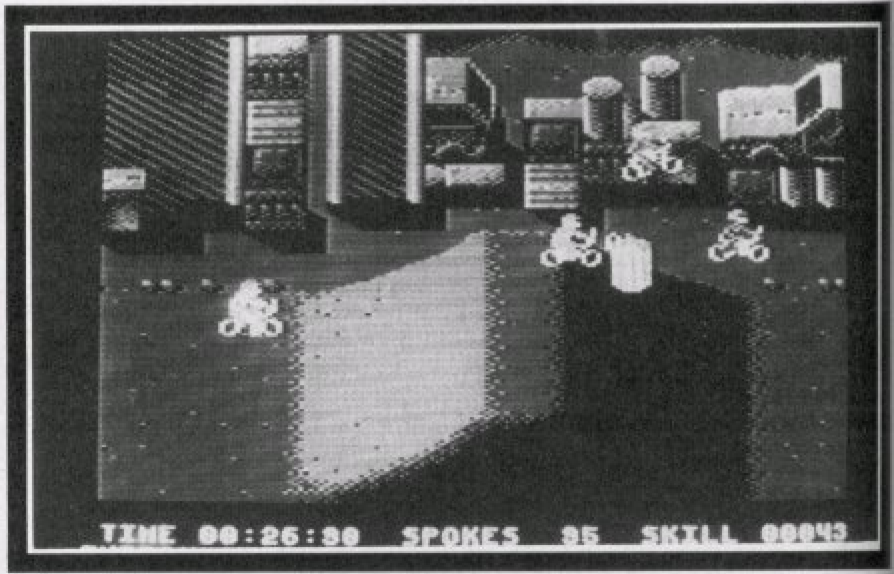
You have to watch a couple of readouts pretty carefully if you want to survive. You have energy which is divided into three coloured sections, white, yellow and red. As your energy in each section runs out you slow down until finally it's game over. The other readout is of the amount of spokes you have left. If you make a foul up you have to pay for it in the 'ol wheel spindles. A miss timed wheelie for instance which leaves flat on a forty-five degree ramp will cost you twenty spokes while a miss timed stunt might only cost you ten depending on how badly you make a hash of things. Your spokes and energy can be replenished during a race by finding spare wheels and coke cans.

To perform a wheely all you have to do is press and hold the fire button, then release it at the high point of the movement. Performing a stunt is much harder; this entails pressing fire the moment you hit a ramp, which catapaults you high into the air, following this you've got to rotate the bike's wheel up a bit until the biker starts flashing (*Ooer — Ed*) then press fire to do the stunt. Now comes the tricky bit, you have to get the bike horizontal again before you hit the ground. This may all sound a trifle easy, but your up against the clock and six other riders so it's not plain sailing.

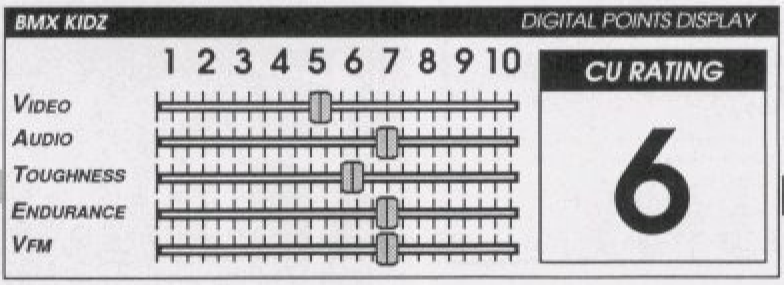
One thing to watch out for are ramps that start off steep then flatten out on the opposite side, if you're not wary of what's going on you might not notice yourself being launched into mid-air only to come crashing down and going A over T. The other bikers can also prove hazardous to health as a large bunch of them tend to cluster around you at once causing a heavy bout of psychotic subtraction to take place on the number of spokes you have remaining. They're not that intelligent though, for the best part of the race all you can hear is a loud bong as a biker takes off then fouls up his landing.

I didn't get the push from *BMX Kidz* to go out and do it, so my old BMX is still rusting under the garden stairs. I did find it entertaining at first but as the game progressed and I mastered the stunts and wheelies it became progressivly easier with the result that I had nearly finished the game in one night. Not bad for the money asked, I suppose, but not really enough substance to keep you away from "Neighbours".

Mark Patterson



▲ ***. . . and so what?***





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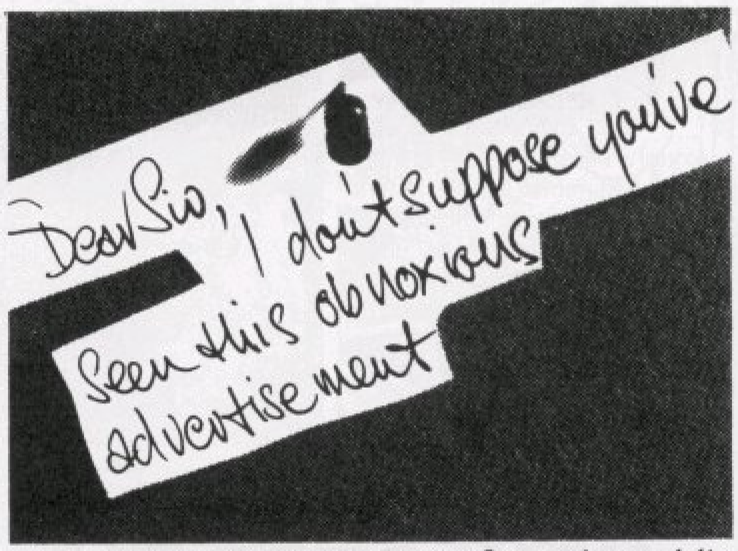
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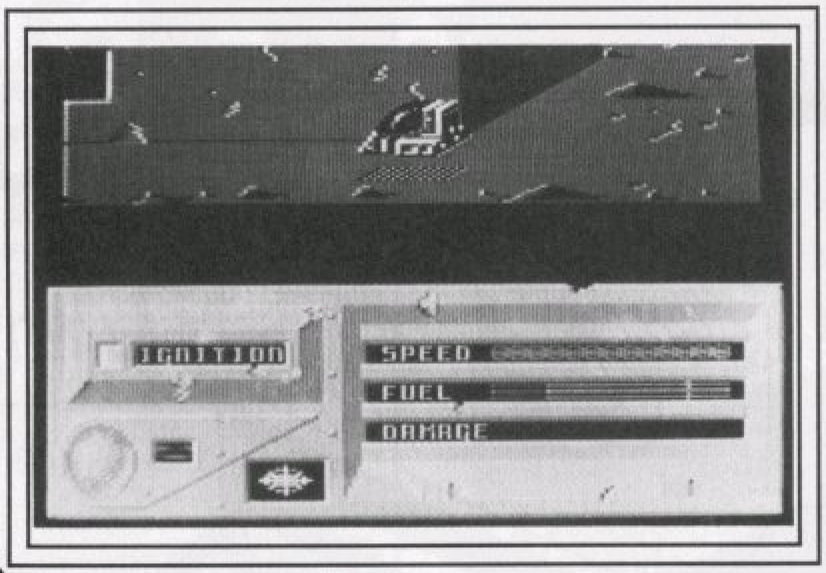
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Hop into the Mandroidmobile.

Mandroid

Anyone remember *Cyborg*? Released by CRL almost a year ago, it was a mildly intriguing but frequently irritating exploration game. Things weren't helped by some feeble sound effects and blocky graphics, combined with grossly inadequate instructions.

So it's a bit surprising that CRL has now produced a sequel — *Mandroid* — which, though different in many respects, still suffers from all the shortcomings of the earlier game.

Yet again the inlay card tells you sweet Felicity Adams, other than that your mission this time is to seek and destroy the evil Max, who is using stolen Mandroid designs to construct a vast cyborg army. Shrugging, you start to load the program, and it's only at this point that you discover (from a message hidden on the loading screen) that further information can be found on the flip side of the cassette. So you stop the tape, rewind it, and load Side B — an annoying and totally unnecessary procedure which could have been avoided if CRL had taken the trouble to label the cassette properly or, better still, supplied a detailed instruction sheet.

This library section on the B side consists of a dozen screens of text and legoland graphics. These are supposed to help you identify the bandits, thieves, guards, whores and other lifeforms which you'll encounter in the game. Apart from the women and some assorted droids and robots, most of the characters look so similar that by the time you've loaded side A again you've forgotten which is which.

As in *Cyborg*, all the action takes place in a narrow strip across the top of the screen, the space below reserved for the various control panels and icon screens that you'll come across during play. These include a Communications menu, which allows you to interrogate, threaten and bribe any passers-by who you bump into, and also the Weapons display, enabling you to swap your hand-gun for a laser rifle, grenade or any other weapon which you've acquired.

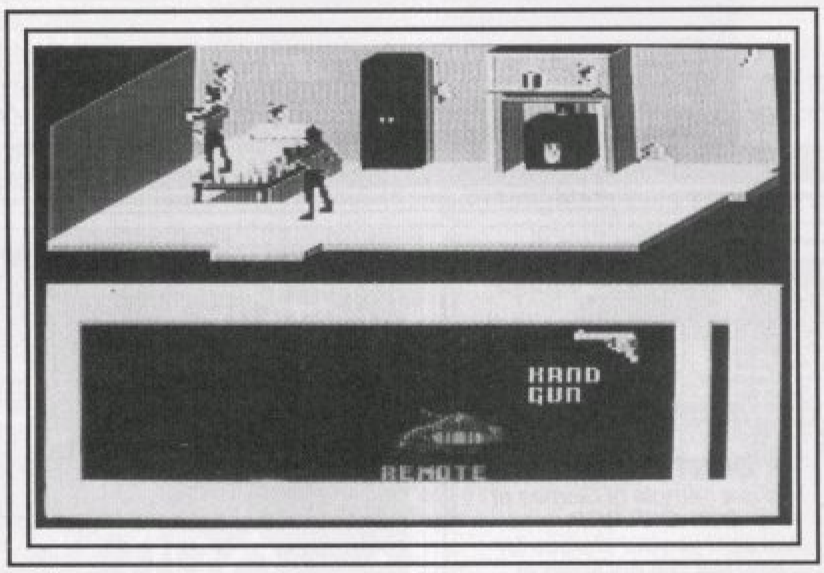
The playing area is large: a sprawling landscape of boulder-strewn sands, stagnant pools, dirty rivers and streets of shell-damaged buildings, depicted in adequate but uninspired graphics. Portals and bridges lead into adjacent screens, and the houses are warrens of interconnecting rooms.

Charting your way through this maze is a thankless task, made more difficult by the hordes of villains who swarm in all directions, guns at the ready. If you stop and question them successfully — a laborious task in itself, involving a lot of juggling with joystick and function keys — they might cough up some useful information about the map, or sell you a gun. More often, though, they walk away or worse still, you accidentally shoot them. Once shots are fired, the natives get unfriendly, and you're in for a surprisingly tedious shoot-out.

Cash dispensers can be used to obtain funds for buying guns or bribing bandits, and these funds can be further increased by playing the fruit machines found in some of the buildings. There are other goodies for you to discover, and most useful of all is the little spacecraft which allows you to travel at speed across the terrain, splattering any unfortunate bods who happen to get in the way.

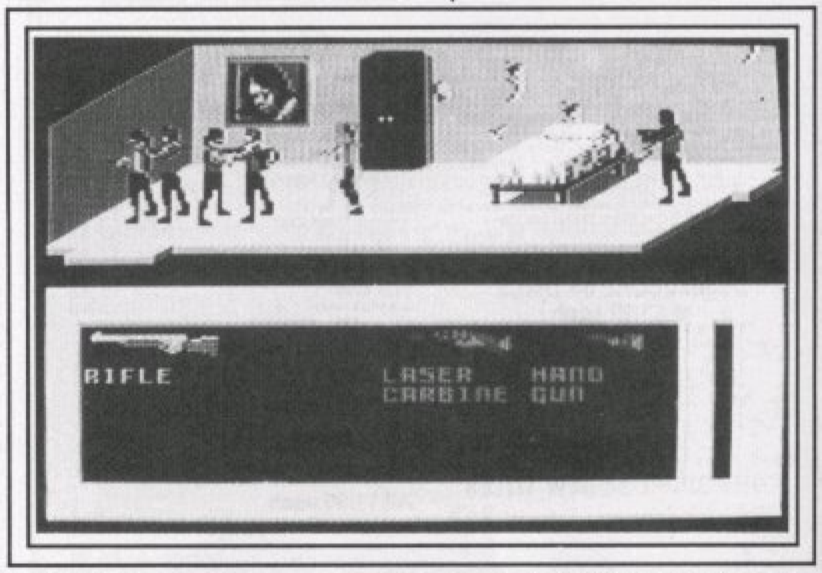
But such occasional delights don't do much to compensate for the poverty of the animation and sound, and mind-numbing repetition of the gameplay. There's no scoring facility, or indeed any indication of how near you are to completing the game, and you've only got one life — lose that and the whole frustrating unrewarding, process begins all over again.

Bill Scolding



Search a few rooms.

Why are all those people in the bedroom?



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CU RATING: 5

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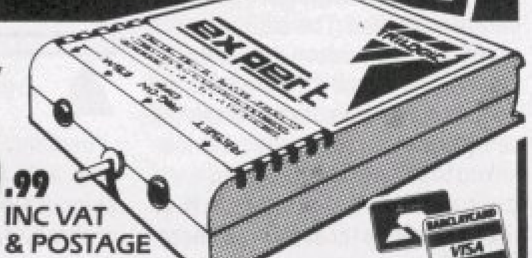
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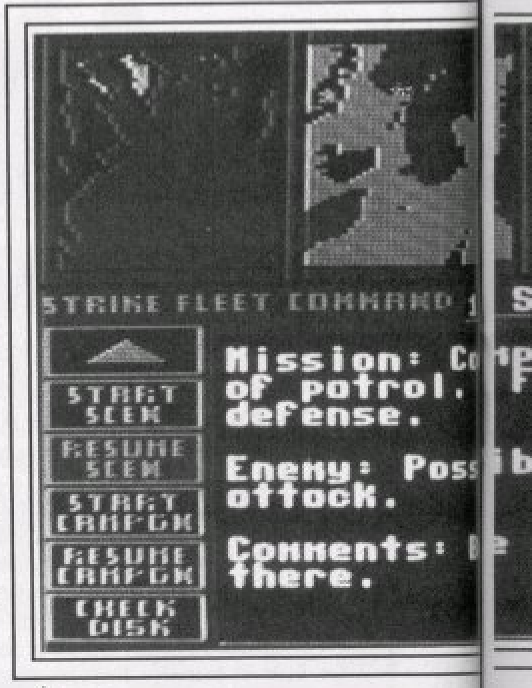
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Strike Fleet is the kind of ambitious multi-scenario combat sim that few software houses, with the obvious exception of Microprose, would be amibitious enought to attempt. Perhaps not surprisingly, the game bears more than a passing resemblance to EA's *PHM Pegasus* hydrofoil sim which was released just before Christmas last year. *Strike Fleet* goes much further in virtually every respect, from the complexity and number of vessels and weapons systems you can control to the diversity of real-life scenarios in which the player can become involved.

The manual, which runs to more than 60 pages, offers a 'quick-intro' option for those who don't want to spend a weekend delving into the finer details of modern missile-based naval warfare. So those with an itchy trigger finger can be up and running inside an hour. *Strike Fleet* can really be tackled on two levels: as an action arcade game, or as a fully fledged naval combat simulation as accurate as you can get on the 64. Most people will probably go for something in between, it's really as complicated as you want to make it.

The defining feature of the game, as the name suggests is that the player controls not one, but any number of vessels up to sixteen. Usually most of your time will be spent on the flagship, the other ships are looked after by the computer until you decide to bring them into use. Success depends to a large degree on sound tactics and strategy — using each of the ships to its best advantage in a particular situation and all of them working together so as to make their numbers a strength rather than a weakness.

I decided to jump in at the deep end and leave manual reading until I had been blow out of the water two or three times. The first screen displayed is the Strike Fleet Command screen which gives details of the mission briefing. You can choose from ten missions which get progressively more difficult. The objective is, obviously, to complete the scenario in the allotted time, i.e. doing what you are told. On occasions this means destroying everything in sight, but it doesn't always and if you let loose like a maniac in what is essentially a defensive role you won't be looked upon kindly.

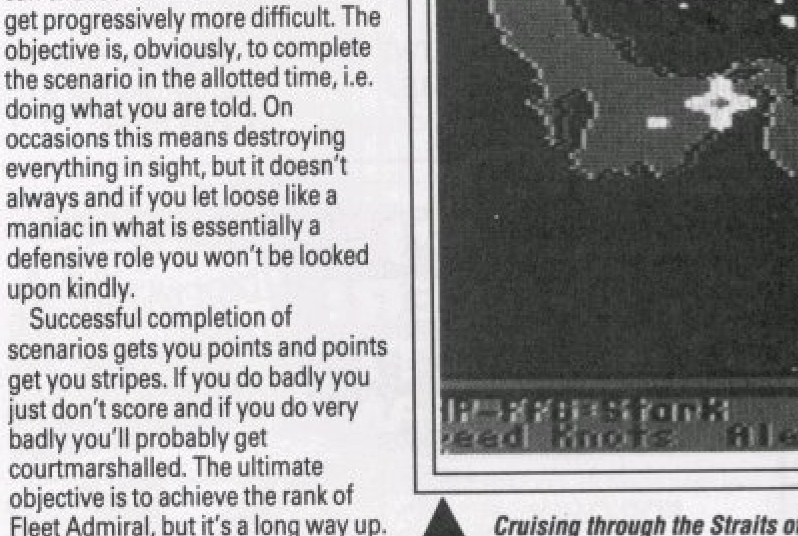
Successful completion of scenarios gets you points and points get you stripes. If you do badly you just don't score and if you do very badly you'll probably get courtmarshalled. The ultimate objective is to achieve the rank of Fleet Admiral, but it's a long way up. To get that far you have to undertake campaigns — a series of scenarios linked together. The one thing campaigns have in common is that they all include the last three, most difficult scenarios.

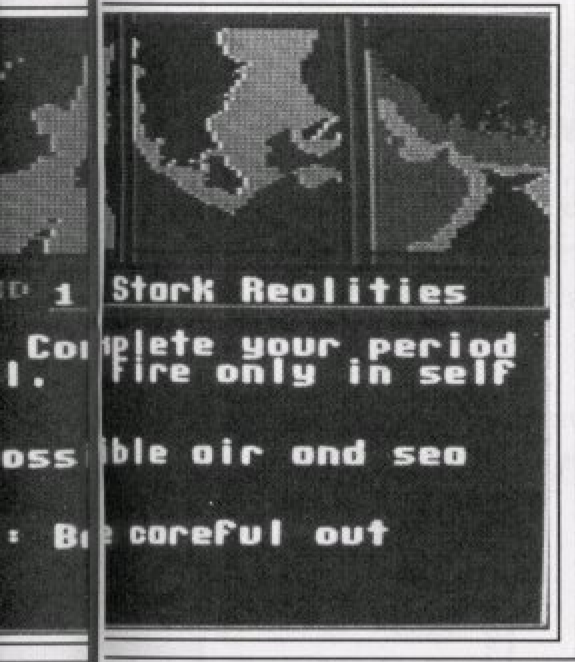
In scenario 1 you control only one ship, a US frigate, defending neutral shipping in the Persian Gulf. A primarily defensive role in which you fire only if fired upon. You will

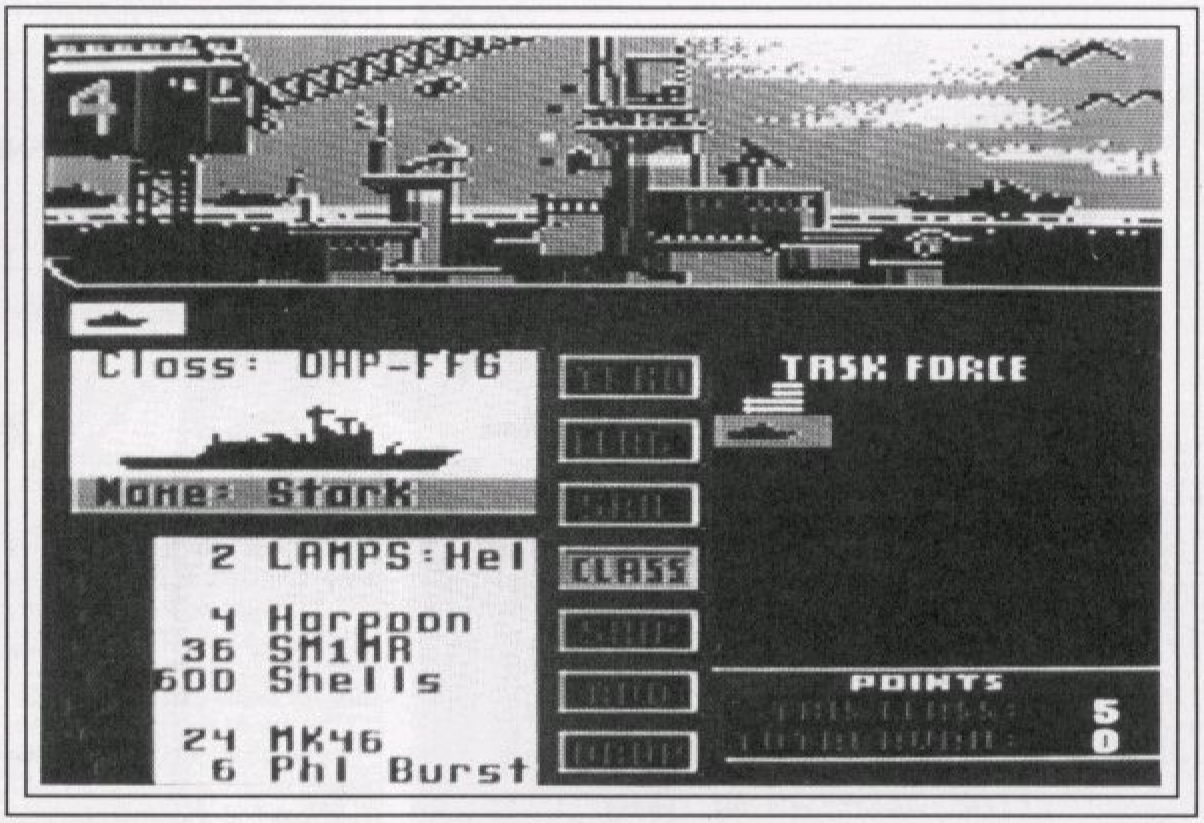
Scenario 1: just you and your frigate.



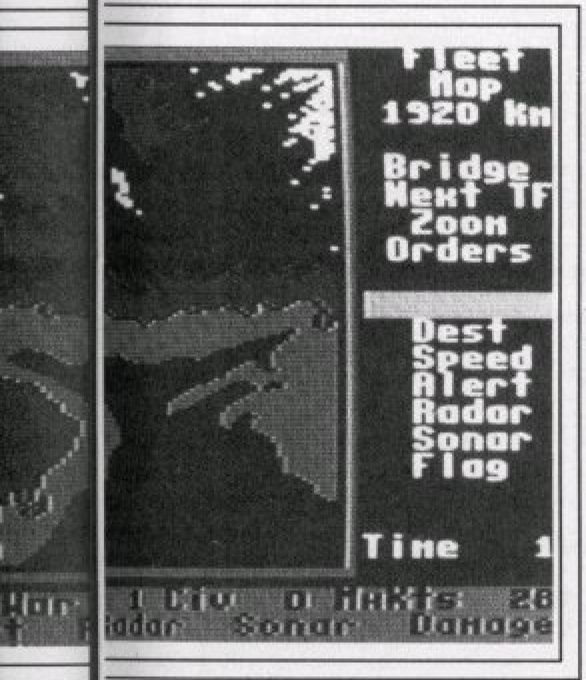
Iraqi Mirage fighter on the horizon.







▲ ***Strike Fleet* — the military sim that puts you in control.**



ormus.

be. Scenario 2 has you in command of two British Frigates chasing Argentinian subs in the South Atlantic. Don't forget that you will lose points unless they are facing in the opposite direction and heading for home when you sink them. From there you can move on to escorting reflagged tankers in the Persian Gulf with a 7 ship task force and another slog-it-out in the South Atlantic. The remaining scenarios all focus on a hypothetical WWIII against the USSR in Scandinavian waters, concluding with 'mopping up' in which, though the war is virtually at an end you finish off what remains of the Soviet navy just for kicks, before the boys in suits put an end to all the fun.

I recommend you start with scenario 1 just to get accustomed to which button does what. Everything can be done with the joystick — highlighting panels on the console with the fire button, but there are key equivalents and if you can remember them they're faster. Once you have selected your ships — an easy task in this scenario as there is only one — you can set sail. You are then presented with the Command Information Centre which, in addition to giving you a large map of the area, allows you to give orders to the fleet.

Primarily the CIC is used to set courses for each of your ships. The map has a zoom facility which, as well as giving a more detailed view allows you to issue orders at task force and individual ship level. In this way you can split your fleet into several smaller task forces, merge taskforces and change flagships. From the CIC you can go to the bridge of the currently selected ship which is where the action takes place.

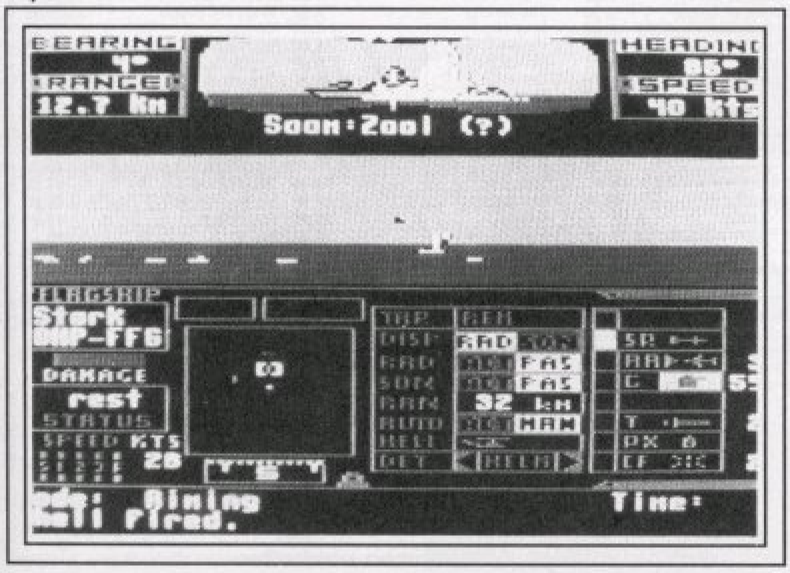
The bridge screen shows all navigational instrumentation, weapons systems and of course the view ahead. It's mainly a question of keeping your eye on the radar, or sonar if you're looking for subs and using the right weapons to destroy them if and when necessary. Time can be compressed up to 128 fold when nothing interesting is happening. When it does you will get a blip on the screen and can target and view using the binocular view at the top of the screen.

It's obviously as essential to protect your ships as it is to destroy the enemy's. Incoming missile warning systems give advance notice of threats and they can be dealt with by targetting and firing AA missiles, chaff, and, as a last resort, shells. It's important to detect threats at the earliest possible opportunity and you can do this to best effect by properly deploying your forces and using scout ships. You can hop about from ship to ship using the change bridge command, very handy if the one you happen to be on is about to be sunk. Scenario 1 only gives you one ship, but you can make effective use of the two helicopters by sending them out to scout and using their radar as remote tracking stations for your long range missiles.

Where *Strike Fleet* leaves similar games standing is obviously in the control it gives you over everything. There are now a number of these kinds of games available where the military detail, accuracy and diversity is about as complete as you could hope for. But in most if not all of them 90 percent of the hardware is under computer control, they are automated players in the game leaving you with limited if any control over what they do. *Strike Fleet* gives you the opportunity, if you want it, to take control of the whole situation and so will hold a much greater appeal for the dedicated war games fan.

Ken McMahon

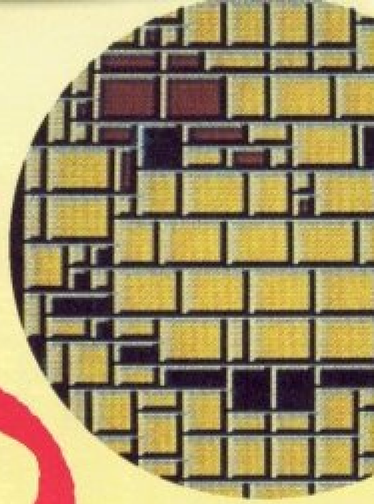
▼ ***Scoring a direct hit on an enemy ship.***



STRIKE FLEET	DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY (1–10)
VIDEO	7
AUDIO	7
TOUGHNESS	9
ENDURANCE	8
VFM	7

CU RATING

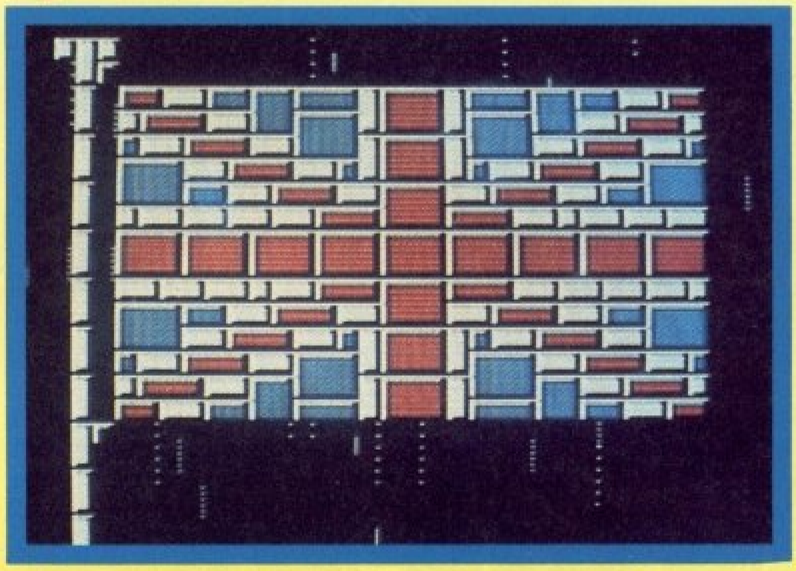
7



Human Bean Juice: Who watches the Watchman?

Ricochet

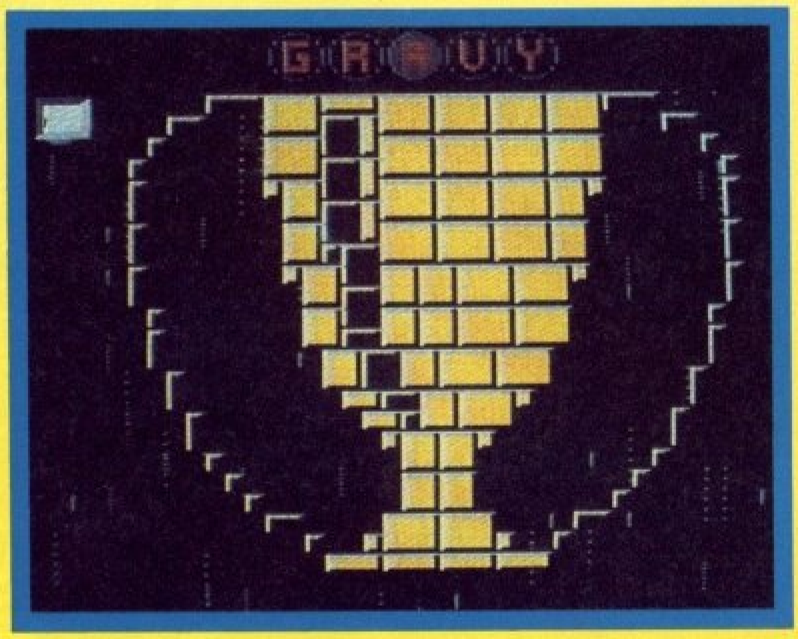
64/128
Firebird
Price: £1.99



Best of British: Should be a copy of CU . . .

Joining the already large market of re-vamped early '80s pioneer games, *Ricochet* is the only budget *BreakOut* spinoff to date and well worth the sum asked.

As with most of these types of game a plot is not really required. There's a bat at the bottom of the screen, and a brick wall at the top, the aim of the game being to smash all the bricks to proceed to the next level. However, on *Ricochet*, above the bricks written in large circled letters is the word GRAVY, and under the bat is the screen's name which changes to men and score after a short period.



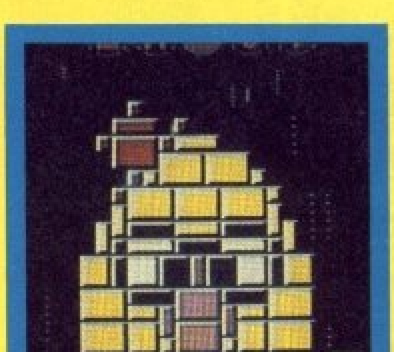
Sweet FA; Not this season.

Ricochet takes the *BreakOut* format to the lighter side of computer entertainment, as demonstrated by some of the more wry screens. One of my favourites knocks the stockbrokers, with the BP symbol in one corner and a slumping progress chart in the other. In between each level is a totally insignificant bonus screen, with titles like Manic Helicopters for a screen where you're attacked by flying heads. For destroying the various entities on the bonus rounds you get one meagre point for everyone rammed but a nice round hundred for each shot.

There are several different weapons along with several different ways of collecting them. The best of the bunch is the *Greased Lightning*. Anyone who has ever played *R-Type* or knows what the lasers in that are like will instantly know what this looks like. Then there's the Gism Gun, which sounds more fun than it really is. In fact it's nothing more than the standard upwardly mobile brick thrashing laser. Then there's Magno Bat (catch), and Violent ball. Instead of giving you a laser this equips your ball with one, the direction in which it fires is controlled by the joystick. Whilst effective, this can often leave your bat stranded in an awkward position. My fave has to be the Angry Yag, a little geezer who appears from time to time showering the screen with balls.

The way to get a weapon is simple: every time you destroy a large coloured block it drops a token, causing the letter corresponding to that colour on the word GRAVY to change colour. After five tokens have been collected the letter starts to flash and then the weapon of the letter of the token is yours. Alternatively you might find it easier to bounce your ball off one of the flashing blocks and collect the instant credit from that.

On top of what is already available, you can collect hyperwarps to take you to the next level, along with extra men and slowdowns. What these have in common apart from being in the same game, is that they all have to be used by going to a separate screen. On this screen, reached by pressing the space bar, is a total of the items you have plus the current ball speed (1-9). When you obtain a weapon or use an extra life the ball speed goes up by one, so the slow downs tend to be more vital than in say, *Arkanoid*, where they're often of nuisance value.



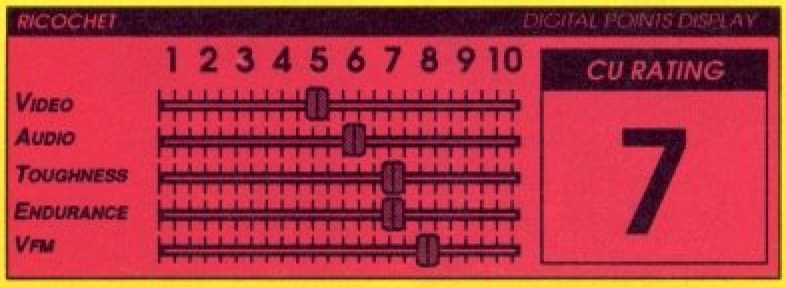
Ode To Brennan: ex-Zzap Ed Clarin that is.

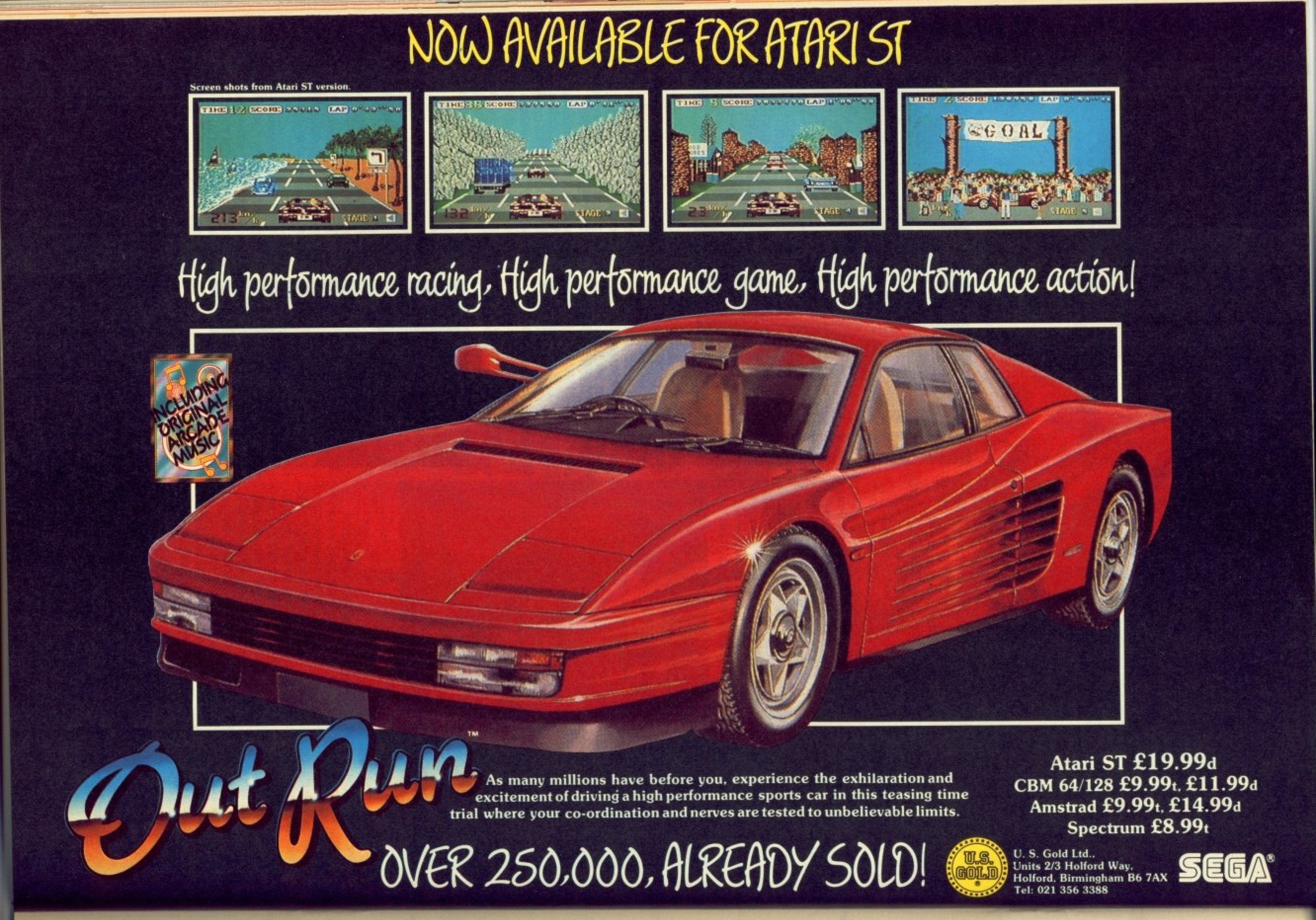
One other feature is the useful suicide key, which allows you to go to the next level by forfitting a life. But what makes *Ricochet* great is the construction kit. It's not very comprehensive but it does make a pleasant change from the normal stuff. Then there's the sixteen randomly selected high-score tables which are reselected when you reload.

Apart from the nice title screen 'toon' the sound is pretty mediocre, the graphics the same, with some weird sprites and screens which could only be the product of somebody who was totally smashed out of their minds at the time of programming.

Incomparable with *Arkanoid* in nearly every way, *Ricochet* still offers a lot for two squid. Cheap for a game with so much balls.

Mark Patterson





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Skyfox²

64/128
Electronic Arts
Price: £14.95/disk

Back in the mists of time, the legendary Skyfox took to the skies to fight off unprovoked alien tank attacks on terran colonies. And now, some two years later, those pesky alien Xenomorphs are at it again, and all hopes are fixed on the new super-sophisticated rink-dink *Skyfox II* warpfighter to preserve truth, justice and the American way.

Like the earlier game, *Skyfox II* is an import from American-based Electronic Arts, and is another shoot-'em-up and simulation exercise. But this time the emphasis is more on the simulation side: the 16-page instruction manual and the accompanying star map mean that it's going to be several hours before you feel at home in the cockpit, and when you eventually take off into the wastes of space you'll find that space flight is exactly what you always feared it would be — pretty damn tedious.

Piloting the *Skyfox II* is no pushover. There are energy, shield and damage gauges to watch, a scan monitor which can toggle between short, medium and long range as well as fore and aft views. Warning messages flash up when the enemy's about to attack, and a target identifier displays oncoming craft in different colours to denote which side they're on. There's the usual battery of weapons — photon pulse bombs, anti-matter mines and neutron disruptors — and a Head Up Display targetting system locks on to any starbases and craft in the vicinity and shows its proximity.

All these and other functions (decept device, transmission interceptor, shields, etc, etc) mean that you're going to need at least three hands to manipulate both joystick and keyboard, especially at times of crisis.

Crucial to the whole business of *Skyfox II* is, however, getting to understand the map of the Cygnus constellation and the navigation and docking procedure. Most missions order you to fly to a particular region or starbase, and the (x,y) co-ordinates can be calculated using the star map, and then selected on the navigation screen. The autopilot can then be switched on, and all you have to do is override the autopilot whenever you're passing through an asteroid belt — which is most of the time, in my experience.

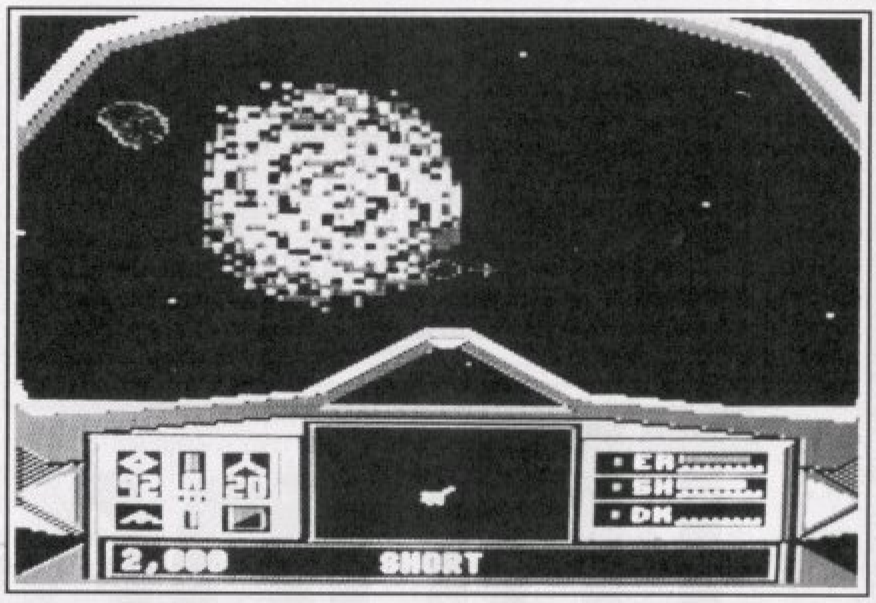
Some of the missions you can choose from are relatively low-risk no-nonsense shootouts, like 'Intruder Alert', but these are also often disappointingly short (one such foray lasted only 29 seconds before returning to base and a hero's welcome). Others include escorting damaged frigates, locating the ancient starbase Boondockia, or acting as bodyguard to a peace ambassador. The more complex the mission, the longer it takes, and the more time you spend travelling through endless showers of meteorites, with only the occasional Xenomorph attack to relieve the monotony.

There are short-cuts called worm-holes scattered throughout the Cygnus star system which theoretically should reduce the gigantic playing area to manageable proportions, but beginners will find that they usually emerge from a wormhole several light years away from their destination.

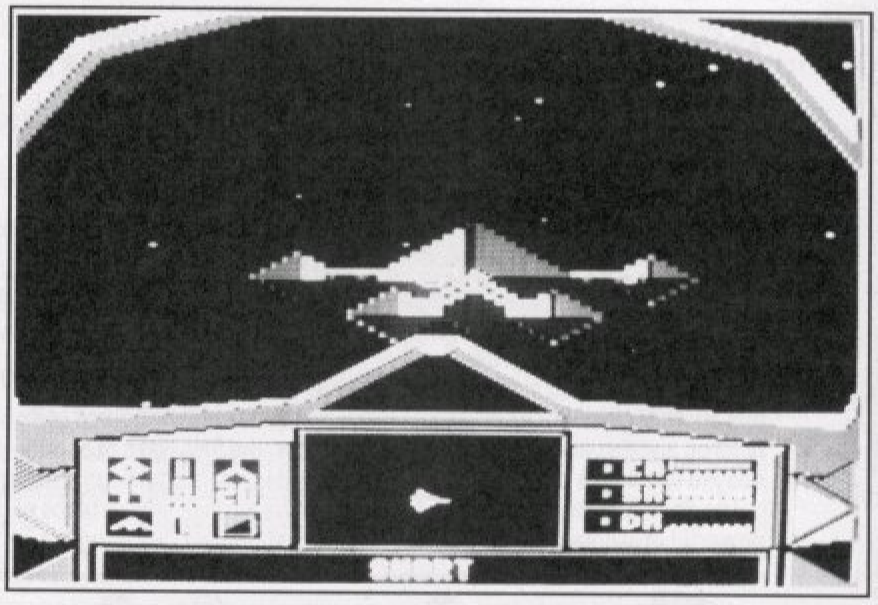
From the polished illustrations which depict each mission, to the solid spacecraft, starbases and asteroids of the flight sequences, the graphics are impressive and smoothly animated. There's not much in the way of sound, but that doesn't seem to matter, and the frequent access to disk doesn't interfere with play.

Flawlessly presented and handsomely packaged, *Skyfox II* suffers from an excess of realism and a lack of fun. It's more likely to appeal to fans of flight simulations than the shoot-'em-up brigade, and even the former might tire eventually of playing dodgems with yet another load of floating rocks.

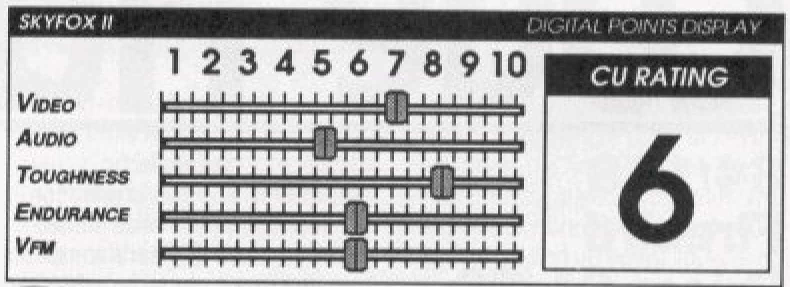
Bill Scolding



Choose your coordinates and off you go.

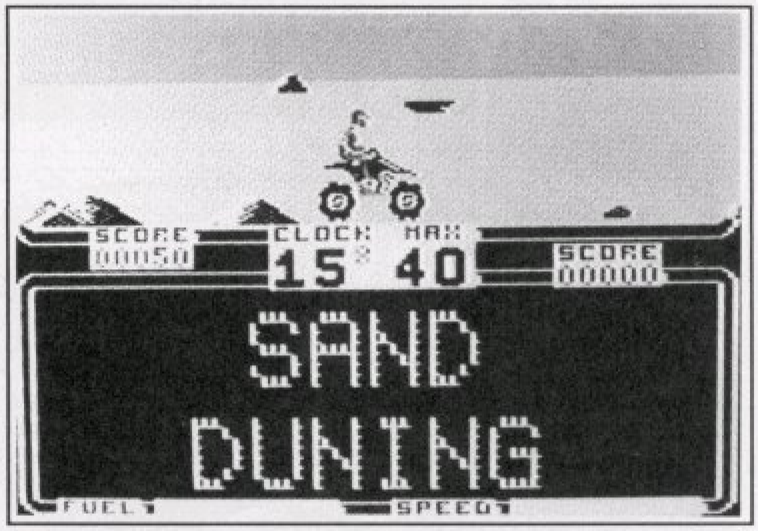


Xenomorph ahoy — prepare for battle.



Skyfox 2

ATV Simulator



◀ *Bomb over boulders . . .*

64/128
Code Masters
Price: £1.99

Following in the tracks of the best-selling *BMX Simulator, Grand Prix Simulator, Fruit Machine Simulator* and *Simulator Simulator* comes the one you've all been waiting for . . . *ATV Simulator*!!

Yes, Code Masters have done it again, and produced a simulation that no-one else had even thought of. While the rest of us were happy in the knowledge that ATV was something we watched *Neighbours* on, the precious Darlings have discovered that it's really an All Terrain Vehicle, a kind of BMX with four wheels that can drive over practically any surface. Lots of scope there for a gruelling mud-churning hang-on-to-your-helmet type simulation, you'd have thought.

But as simulations go, this one doesn't get very far at all. Instead of opting for the realism and multiple options which made *BMX Simulator* so popular, programmers Clark and Francis have gone for a humdrum horizontally scrolling screen format, and have attempted to liven up a

Thundercross

64/128
CRL
Price:
£9.95/cass
£14.95/disc

I'm still trying to make my mind up whether *Thundercross* is a shoot 'em up with a difference or just another *Uridium* clone with bells on and a space saga on the inlay to jazz it up a bit.

The Thundercross is the most powerful dreadnought in the galaxy. An unusual looking design with two engines at the rear and guns protruding from every other available inch of metal, it finds itself in the grip of a powerful tractor beam. To begin with the drain on its power resources is barely perceptible, but the grip tightens and before long the chief engineer has to concede "it's a tractor beam cap'n, I dinna think we can hold out much longer."

As the Thundercross is slowly sucked towards the source of its captors, the first wave of enemy ships begins its attack run. Damage from the strange yellow blobs of their cannon are depleting the shields which are already at dangerously low levels. The best form of defence is attack, so they say, and, of course, they're right. With up to eight guns pointing in every compass direction you need little incentive to get blasting.

The one drawback the *Thundercross* designers seem to have overlooked is that not being able to fire and manoeuvre at the same time can cause severe difficulties. I guess that's the price you pay for having a gun poking in every conceivable direction. One big advantage of this design though, is that you don't have to turn to fire at something that isn't in front of you — wherever it is you're bound to get it sooner or later. Tactics are, however, of the utmost importance, and if you don't get it right the first time around there are no second chances.

The truly great Thundercross captain gets the ship into a fairly central position on the screen and starts blasting in all directions straight away. Those tempted to idly gaze at the starscape scrolling by will get a nasty surprise when the first alien ship screams in and collides with the upper gun turret. From there on in it's keep blasting in all directions. The best tactic is to keep your finger on the fire button

Code Hunter

64/128
Firebird
Price: £1.99

Code Hunter is one of those games that leaves you with red eyes, white knuckles and an overwhelming desire to kill something.

The Earth is under attack by a battlestar of megagalactic proportions. The only chance for survival is to send a code hunter droid into the battlestar's computer complex to decipher the codes that will de-activate its defences. The codes can then be transmitted back to Earth, the Battlestar disarmed and blown to bits by starfighter command.

You control the code hunter droid as it bounces around the Battlestar computer's innards. The computer network is made up of a series of 'cubic nodules' — which look for all the world like Spangles.

The differently marked spangles have various effects on your droid as it bounces around the network under joystick control. If you land on a Spangle with an 'H' on it you end up back on the square from which you started. Some spangles have a left pointing arrow, others a right pointing one. Landing on either of these sends you immediately in the appropriate direction to the next node. The same goes for up and down arrowed nodes.

The ones you really have to watch out for are the plus and minus nodes which replenish and drain your energy respectively. You can sit on a minus node for about five seconds, after which you'll need more than a bottle of Lucozade to get you going again.

Now, this is where it gets confusing, vexing and frustrating. Battlestars aren't content to sit back and let alien droids poke about with the innards of their computers. They deploy guards to chase after and nobble you. On the first screen there are two of them. Fortunately you are not completely undefended. By leaving a bomb on a node and

dull and repetitive scenario with croc-infested swamps, performing seals and pyramids. The result isn't really a simulation at all, but a joke.

With options for one or two players, the game challenges you to mount and ride your ATV over ten short obstacle courses, completing each within the time and fuel limits.

The courses scroll across a split screen, one course for each player, and range from simple 'sand-duning', where the biggest obstacles are rocks, to the more exotic delights of icebergs, desert and jungle. By the time you reach Tropicana, not only are you attempting to bounce on floating logs, but fight off flocks of attacking birds. God knows what the final courses hold in store.

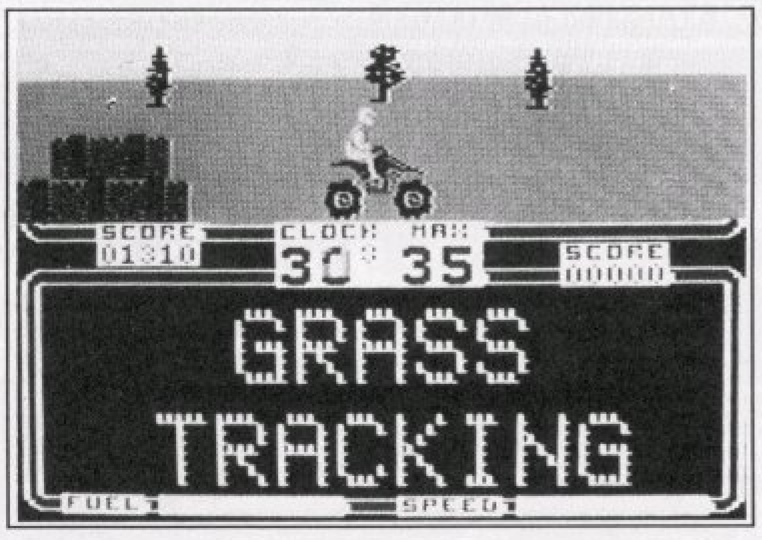
The controls are devastatingly facile — left and right (cursor keys or 'stick) for moving in those directions, up/down for wheelies, and fire button or space bar for jumping. On the whole it's best not to drive too fast, and steep slopes should be approached with front wheels in the air. Jumping will give that extra boost when climbing.

Some minor obstacles can be leapt over at speed, others (like the pyramids and sphinx) negotiated slowly, and if you crash, you can quickly remount and then continue.

The game's saving grace is the two-player option, but that doesn't extend to a computer opponent. There's a hi-score table, and some typically jolly Code Masters music, but the game's also got some shoddy animation, insipid graphics and no sound effects worth mentioning.

The biggest sin is that the thing's altogether too easy, and that, coupled with the ridiculous crocs and seals, should be enough to drive most simulation fans up the wall. On their ATVs, of course.

Bill Scolding



. . . but crawl over crates.

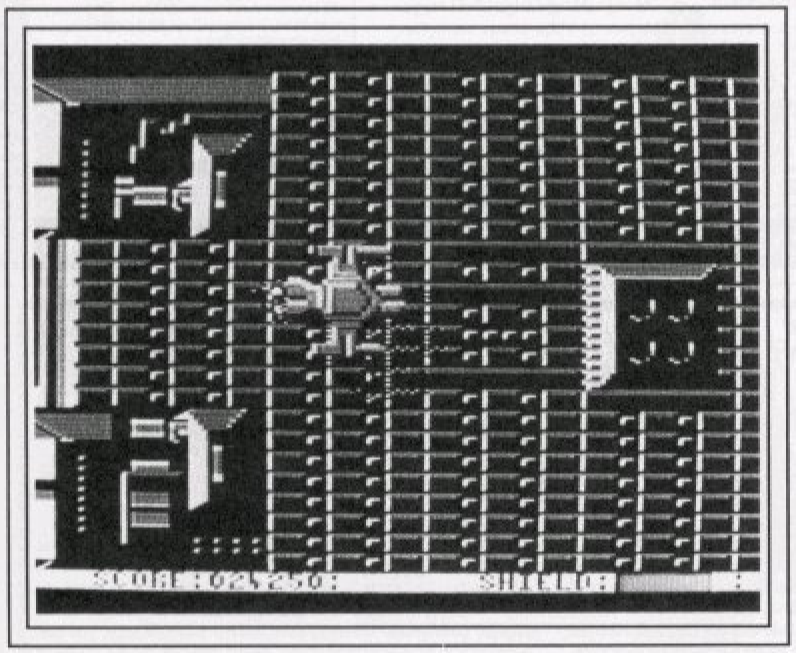
ATV SIMULATOR — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

4



Thunder through the threats.

and tap the joystick in whichever direction they're coming from. That way, if some of your guns get taken out by kamikaze aliens, maximum firepower will still be concentrated where it's needed most. And don't forget to keep an eye on those shields.

If you survive the first wave with shields intact, the space hoover — origin of the tractor beam looms up on the right of the screen. The raised defences of the space hoover will fire relentlessly in your path and these must be taken out at the earliest opportunity with your forward facing 45, 90 and 135 degree guns. Collision with hoover defences is fatal and unless your manouvering skills are superb, if you fail to destroy them all you end up as so much yellow blob fodder.

The true test of skill comes at the end of the space hoover. Here you must hang back at the far left of the screen and blast the raised defences with everything you've got. Only then will it disintegrate and give way to the second alien attack — needless to say a wee bit more difficult to cope with than the first.

There's nothing wrong with *Thundercross* — not much of a recommendation I know. The graphics and animation are good, and the music on the intro screen is great. It's a good blast, tough enough for the most competent — none of this five lives nonsense, when you cop it, that's your lot. The one thing you can be sure of though is that it won't win any awards for originality.

Ken McMahon

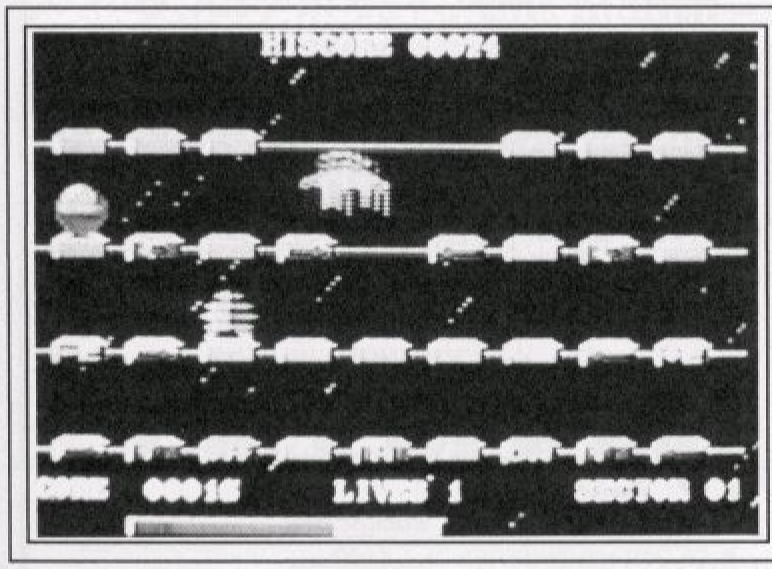
THUNDERCROSS — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

6



Bounce that battling droid.

moving away you can wait for the hapless guard to collide with it. This sends it into a bit of a spin and when it's stopped revolving you can move in and pick up its coded data device.

Doing this to two guards on a network made up of a dozen or so Spangle nodules is, it has to be said, something of a doddle. Then again there are 16 levels, on level two there are three guards on a more complicated network and it doesn't get any easier after that. If you've got the kind of mind that can cope with working out where you're going to end up after hitting two lefts, a right, an up and two downs with a minus somewhere in between, not forgetting you've got two guards breathing down your neck and a bomb to place then you'll get along just fine. Otherwise get someone to tie you to the chair and remove any breakable objects or you might end up doing something you'll regret.

Ken McMahon

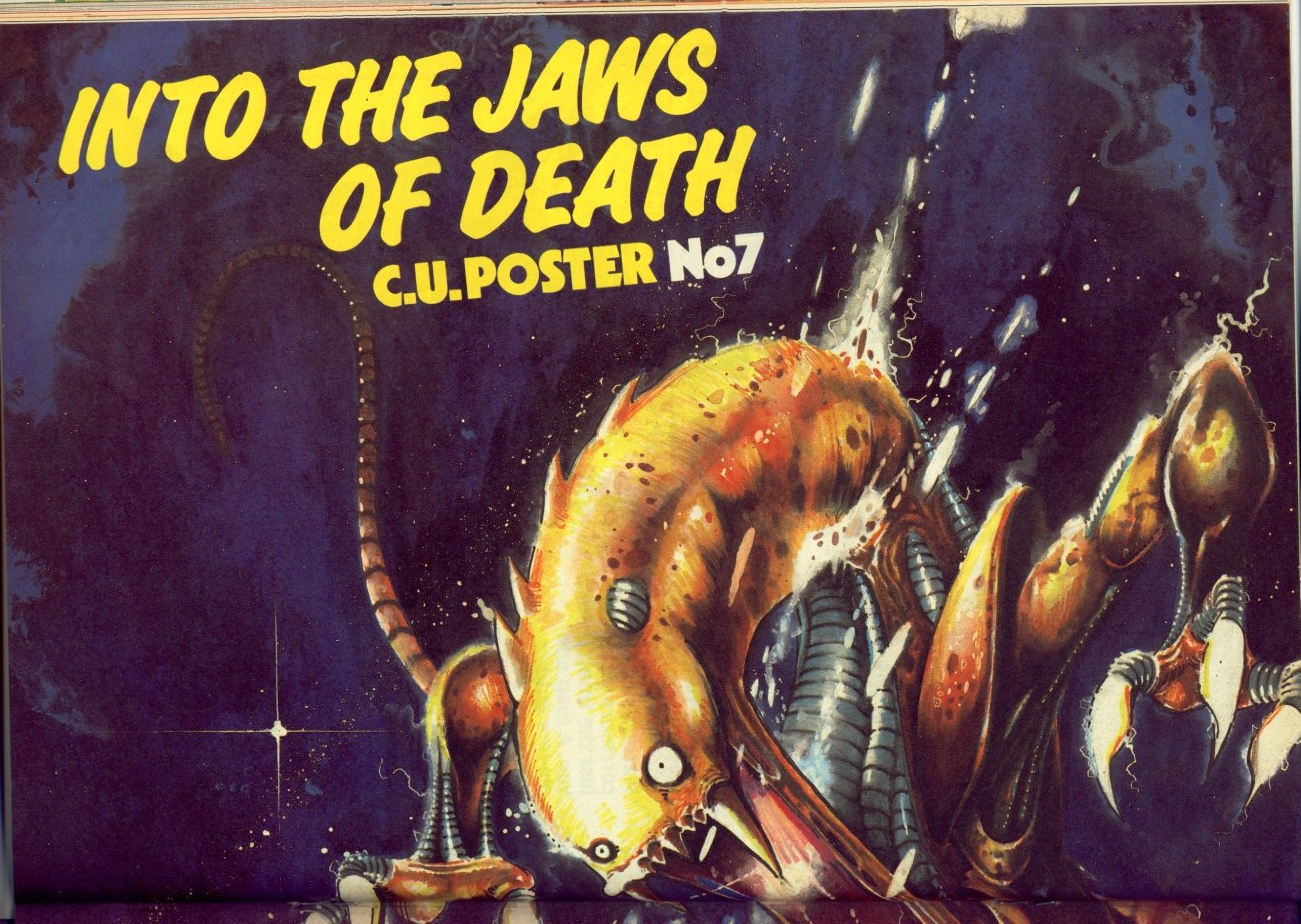
CODE HUNTER — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

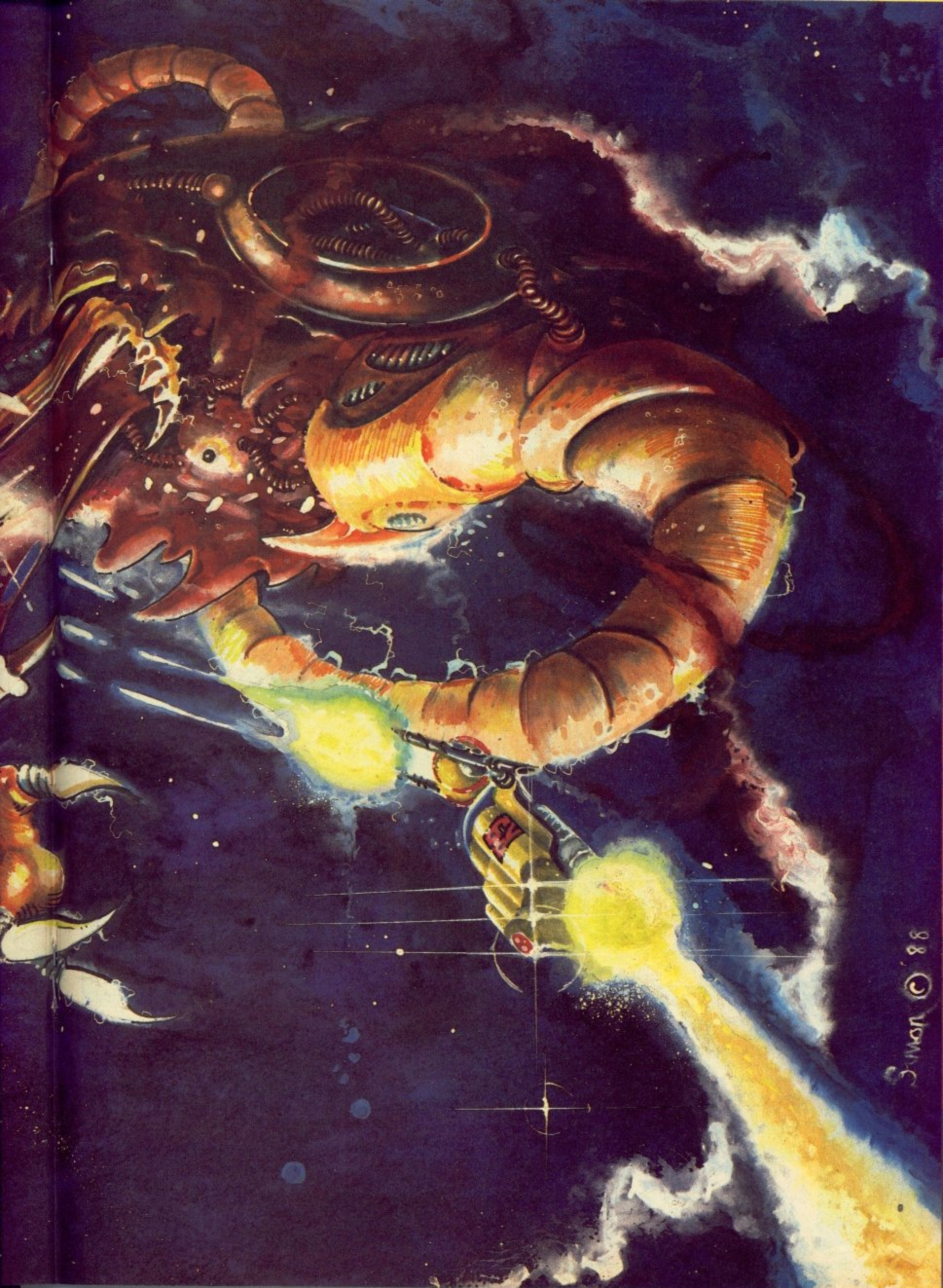
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

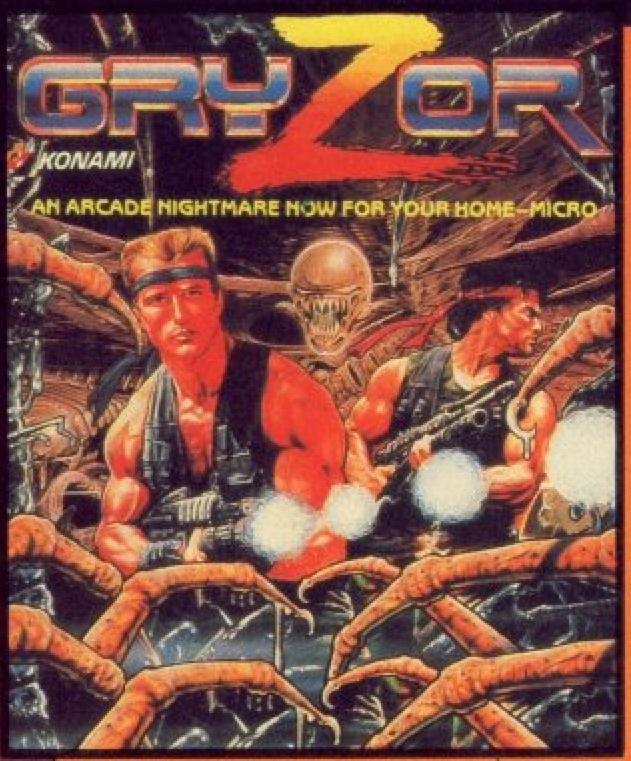
CU RATING

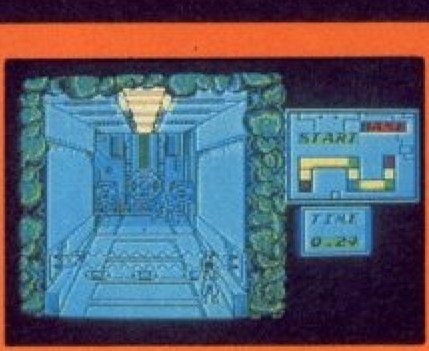
8


INTO THE JAWS
OF DEATH
C.U. POSTER No7


Simon © '88

SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE







GRYZOR

The coin-op smash hit from Konami now for your home-micro. This fantastic conversion with all the original play features takes you into a thrilling alien world . . . . . negotiate force fields and take on fanatical guerillas as you infiltrate their headquarters.

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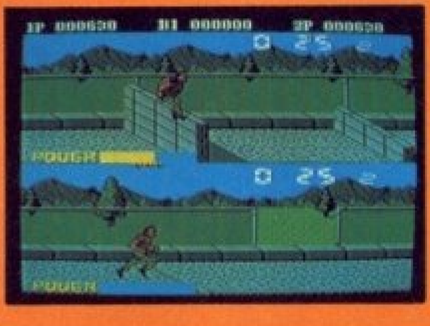
WORLDS APART,

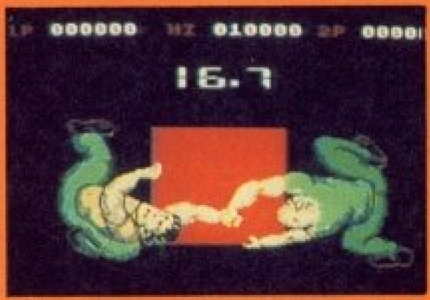
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KNIGHT GAMES 2

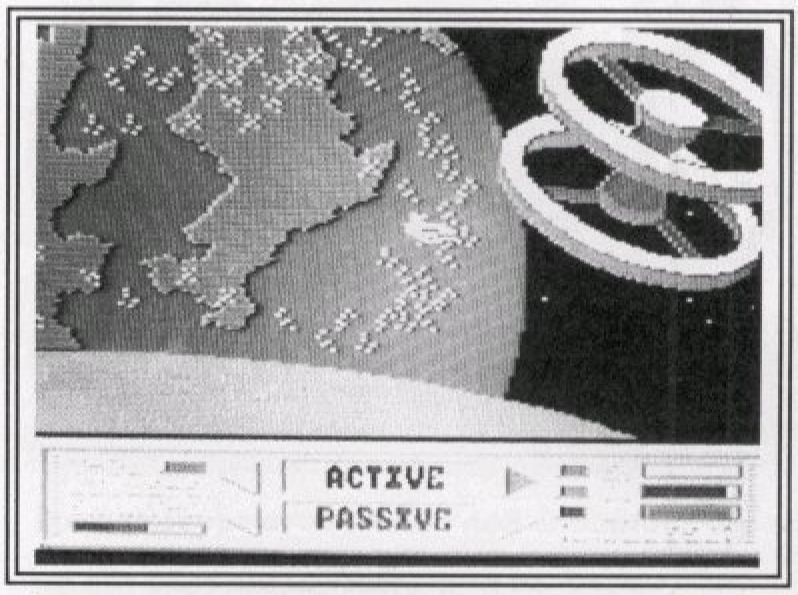
Having been a fan of the original *Knight Games* I must confess to being rather pleased when this came hurtling in my direction. I was looking forward to a good bit of medieval action, a bit of damsel saving perhaps or a little bashing people around the head with a spiked iron ball. So imagine my surprise when I discovered that it was set in space, and what was once a rather appealing game of physical violence and chain mail had somehow managed to turn into a space blast. Confused? So was I . . .

There are three different games in this sequel, and if you think that none of them look particularly knightish, you're right. Apparently in the year 3002, knights are still around, only strangely enough they now seem to look very similar to spaceships. As Sir Frederick you must brave three levels of the most unknightly looking combat I've ever seen.

The first game is called Combat Robot. You fly your very strange looking knight through space, battling aliens, ghosts and magnets while they deplete your energy. Why are you flying through space? Well, I'm not quite sure, but what you must do is fly along picking up the furry, cuddly, and friendly looking aliens by hovering above them for four seconds. Where the hell does the knight come in to it? You may well ask . . .

The knights, it seems, have decided that like the aliens, they would like to hang out on the planet surface and wait till your ship comes and picks them up. So carry an assortment of ten knights and aliens to safety before you progress on to the next level. There are three levels of increasing difficulty. Unfortunately, not of increasing interest!

The second game also has three levels, although they are fairly different. The first sees you in deep, deep, space flying a jet (quite a knightish thing to do!). Basically, this is another shoot 'em up, and you and your plane must shoot them and planes. You are their transported to the next level when you have shot enough of the enemy.



▲ *Knightgames indulges in some courtly stellar combat.*



▲ ***Once a knightgame always a knightgame.***

The second section is also a shoot 'em up, but this time you are given a cockpit view of the action. There are many frisbees flying along in space and you must do the honourable knighty thing and blow then all up!

The third part of this game is a . . . yes, you've guessed it: a shoot 'em up. You are a funny round looking creature who must shoot the alien ships that cross his path before he can venture on to . . .

Game three. Yes you've had so much spacey fun by this time that English have decided to make the third game knight-like. The final tournament puts you in battle with a computer controlled knight. You must fly across the screen and hit your opponent with light-sabres, chains, and a jousting pole. Sound like fun? You're obviously easily pleased! You can hardly tell the difference between the three events, and even if you could it wouldn't make any difference as beating the computer is about as hard as marshmallows.

Three different games, seven different levels, and what have you got? Not a lot, really. It looks as if English had three weak games lying around, and then someone came up with the bright idea of slapping them all on one tape, chucking in a few knighty-type sprites, waffling on about future knights for a while, and then to give it some appeal decided it should be a sequel to one of their better games.

Ferdy Hamilton

KNIGHT GAMES 2 — *DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

4

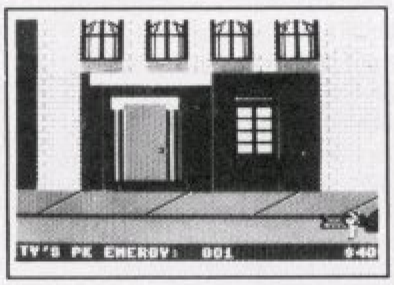
CHEAPO ROUND-UP

Space limitations don't allow us to squeeze in all the latest budget releases and re-releases, so here's a round-up of the best of the rest.

GHOSTBUSTERS
Ricochet

The first time the old classic has ever appeared at less than full price. In its day it was state-of-the-art — a big licence, great sound and music, and even some of the earliest and best speech ever heard on the 64. Although it became one of the biggest ever sellers with over half a million sales worldwide there are probably a few of you out there who have never seen it.

Just to refresh your memories the idea is to make as much money as possible by catching ghosts. You begin with $10,000 dollars and use it on some ghost grabbing gear like a hearse and ghost traps. Then you leap in the car, hoover up a few ghosts, visit as many buildings as possible and set up ghost traps. It was all good fun and it's without doubt the best re-release around. **(8)**



ROLLAROUND
Mastertronic

Rollaround is one of *those* games. You know the sort: far from outstanding, but somehow frustrating enough to make you come back for more. First impressions are deceptive. It looks like a *Spindizzy* rip-off, but on playing it immediately becomes obvious that it's nothing of the sort.

The idea is to roll around playing areas comprising nine rooms and collect the requisite number of crosses to allow you to progress to the next level. However you have to collect crosses from the correct coloured squares, which isn't so bad on the first level as you only have to collect crosses from white squares, but having to collect crosses from red, white, purple, blue, yellow and green squares isn't so easy.

If this wasn't bad enough there are holes to jump and aliens to avoid. There are also two types of square which do strange things to the playing area. One turns plain squares into squares bearing crosses, and vice versa, while another special square turns plain squares into holes, and vice versa. Squares with a question mark either kill you or award you with an extra life or 1000 bonus points.

And that's about it, really. As I said, this is one of those games. It's nothing special but it does provide sufficient entertainment for only two quid . . . **(6)**

JUDGE DREDD
Ricochet

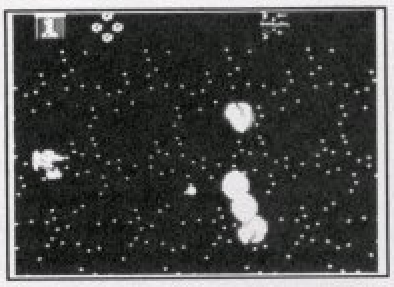
For every useful reduction of an old game it looks like we'll have to put up with a dozens of full price turkeys. *Judge Dredd* was another in a long list of massacred comic licences, massacred in this case by Melbourne House. They took old lantern jaw and put him into a platform and ladders romp that should have earned them a long spell in the iso-cubes. A reasonable likeness to the original Mega City Man doesn't really stop this being pure drokk . . . **(5)**

MICROBALL
Alternative Software

Not a lot has been heard of Steve Evans in the past couple of years. The man who brought you such a brilliant version of that arcade classic *Defender* (Alligata's *Guardian*) was working on a conversion of its successor *StarGate*, but sadly it's been forgotten. Steve's latest production is a pinball game, and . . . erm, that's about it. *Microball* is full of pinbally things and is a reasonable pinball game, one of the few available — especially at this price. If you like this sort of thing this is right up your street. Otherwise, forget it . . . **(6)**

ZYBEX
Zeppelin

Another in a growing line of budget companies joins the cheapo bin boxes. Their first release, a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up over sixteen levels isn't a bad start either. In fact to do injury to an already insulted Go!, it's a better version of *Sidearms* than their licenced conversion. Having said that don't go thinking it's the definitive thing — it isn't, not by a long way. In fact if *Zybex* is to acknowledge inspirational debts *Delta* should be top of the list. For three quid it's well worth it . . . **(6)**



KNUCKLE BUSTERS
Ricochet

Written by *Garfield* programmer Martin 'Mat' Sneap (now working for System 3) about a year ago. The plot goes something along the lines of breaking out of a lobotomy laboratory and fighting your way past android guards. The only lunatics in it really are the people who bought it first time around. A reduction of seven quid doesn't really help matters. No-one wants a crap game at any price . . . **(3)**

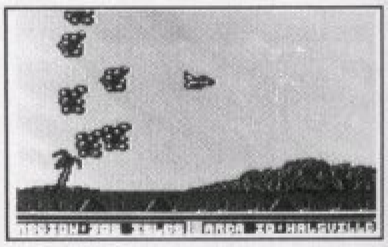
THUNDERFORCE
Rack It

In the year 2187 (it says) a criminal group take you prisoner and hold you in a deep dungeon. Since that's over two hundred years away though, you really shouldn't worry too much, so give this poor-man's *Kung-Fu Master* a miss . . . **(3)**.

ENERGY WARRIOR
Mastertronic (MAD)

Chemical pollution and neglect have obliterated earth and turned much of it into a wasteland. All that remains are a few unspoilt nature reserves and they're your responsibility. It all looks like a nice cushy number for David Bellamy types until a load of gypo aliens arrive and start squatting on it. Before you know it you're embroiled in an almighty shoot 'em up across ten levels.

A game of 'tactics and strategy' says the blurb, which makes it sound like Risk. It's not, and the only sensible strategy we can see is not to spend any money on it at all . . . **(5)**



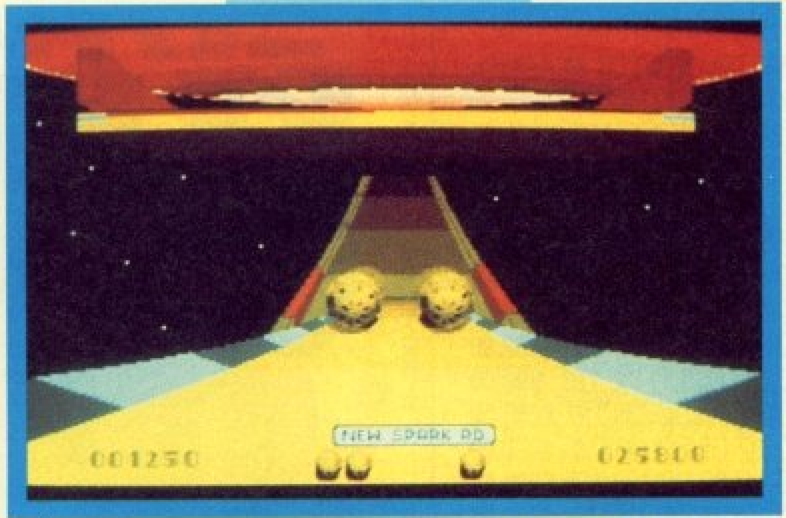
CHEAPO ROUND-UP

ROAD WARS

Set in the twenty-fifth century, *Roadwars* is the story of a huge burnt out planet called Armageddon. Originally named Sarac, this planet was the completely decimated in the galactic wars of 2371.

Now a tourist attraction and monument to peace, Armageddon is visited by billions of beings each year. Because the planet is radioactive, people can only live on the moons around it, which are linked together to form a space highway.

Unfortunately, the computers that control these links have gone a little mad, and as a result they are no longer safe. The huge magnetic side panels which once held traffic firmly on the road now send violent electric sparks across it, which is, as you would imagine, slightly worrying.



Switch on to a bonus level.

Being the brave chappy that you are, you have been chosen to help clear the roadways of all rogue panels. Housed in your heavily armoured battlesphere, it's up to you to save the day.

The whole adventure starts with you at the beginning of 'New Spark' road as you start to make your way down the track. Using the joystick you can raise and lower the protective covering of the sphere to reveal your powerful weapon. However, although the shield can be replaced at the touch of a button, if you leave it a moment too late you will lose it.

As you whizz down the speeding path, large blue and white bolts of electricity fly across it. On either side of these are the rogue panels, and destroying one of them breaks the contact, rendering them harmless once again. Should you be hit by the spark with your shields up, you will be quite safe. You may do this up to seven times, but on the eighth you lose them.

Although great pleasure can be obtained by causing your partner to fall off or explode, you can only succeed by co-operating with him/her. The best thing to do is to set up a cross-fire, destroying both panels as you go past.

Once all the blue panels have been blown away, the exit which connects to the next level opens and, after a few dramatic drum beats, you proceed to a new street.

After every four levels completed you enter a bonus highway where it's head-to-head competition as you try to destroy each other. You see, on this level there is only room for one sphere in the exit!

If destroying blue panels was the only thing to do, life would be simple and the job would be completed by tea-time. However there are other hazards which impede your progress.

Balls are your main concern. These little red blighters come bounding towards you, trying to collide with you. If you hit one with your shields up, it's destroyed. If you have already lost your protection or it is off, you've had it.

As the level number increases, so does the difficulty. Level two sees the arrival of satellites, which glide smoothly along the side of the road firing red laser beams. Other nasties include chevrons, sharp spikes and little blue aliens which, if destroyed, leave behind a completely new set of rouge panels.

With all this against you, your only aid is a small sign with an arrow on it which occasionally appears in the centre of the screen. Rolling over this rewards you with an orbiter — a small sphere which orbits around you providing increased firepower as they fire when you do.

The graphics and sound, it has to be said, are fantastic, however the scenery changes little and this detracts from the overall effect. In fact whilst the general feel of the game is impressive, its lack of variation and fiddly controls lessen its impact. I can't see *Roadwars* taking arcades or homes by storm.

Chris Cain

Roadwars — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

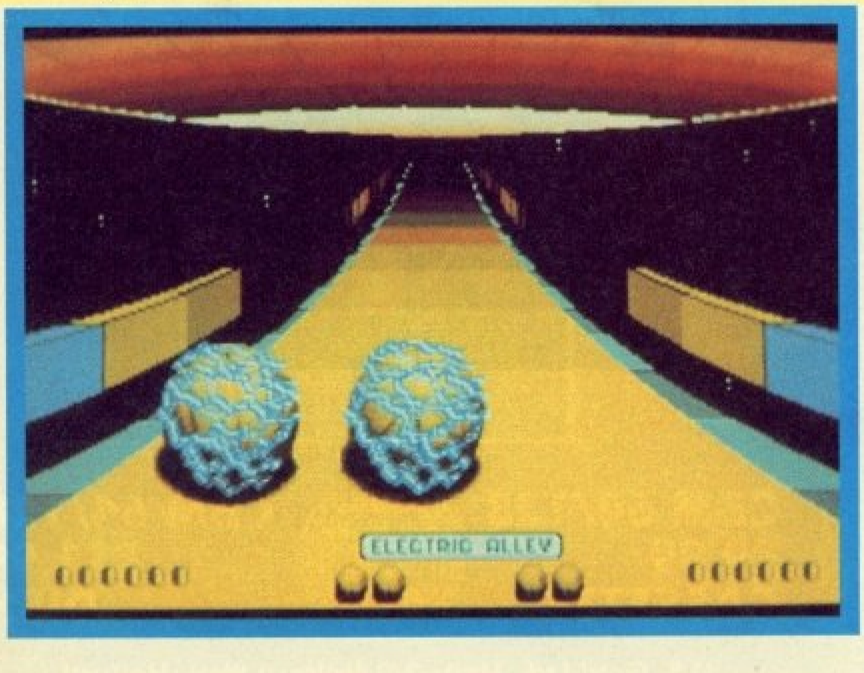
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Video
- Audio
- Toughness
- Endurance
- VFM

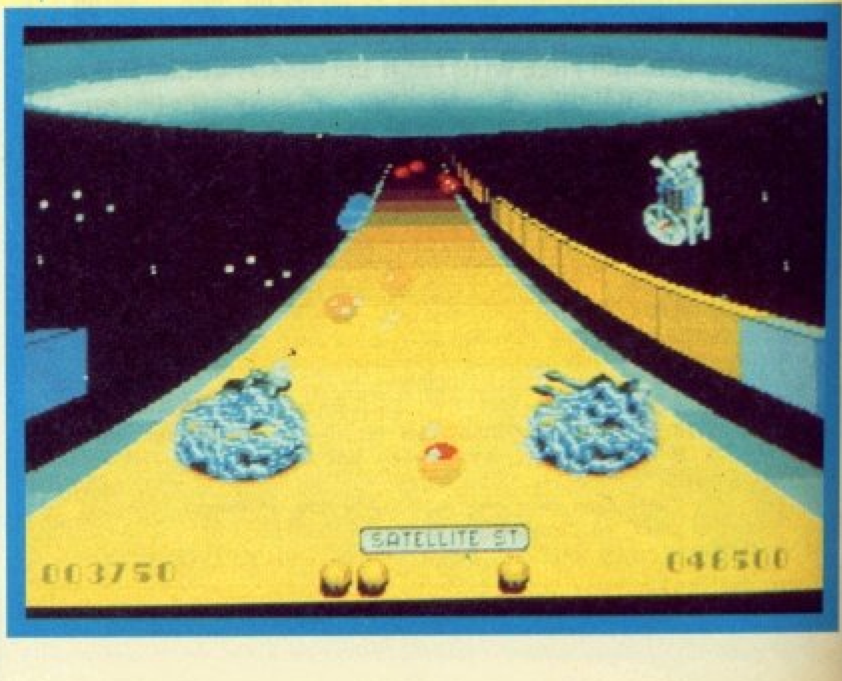
CU RATING: **6**

Melbourne House/ Arcadia
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Electrical charge crackles round the spheres.



Take out the satellites.



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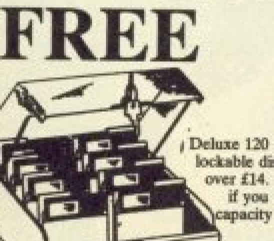
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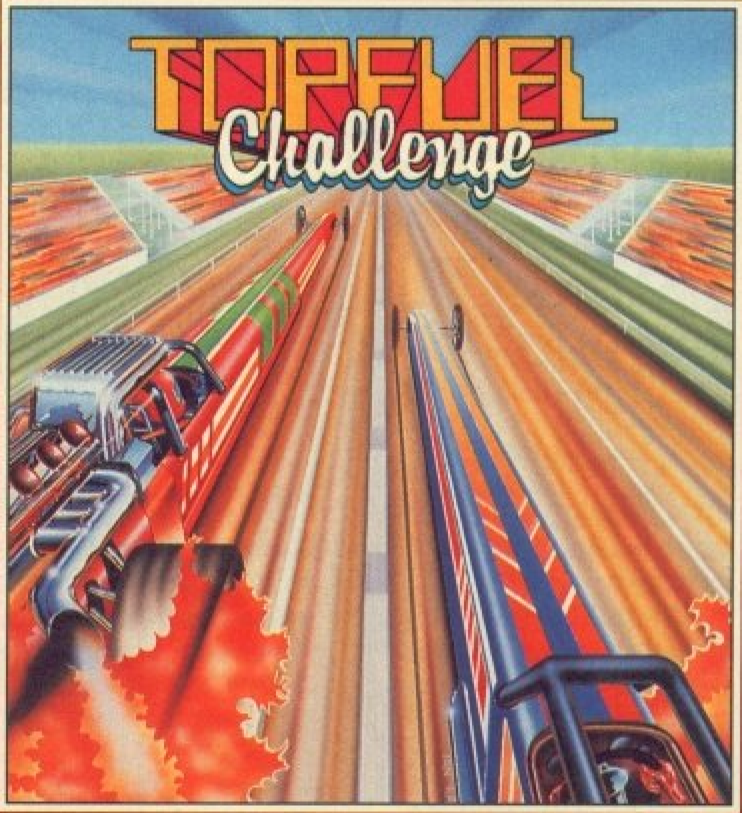
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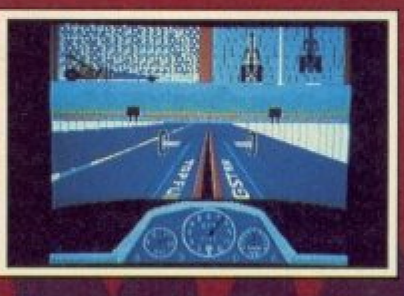
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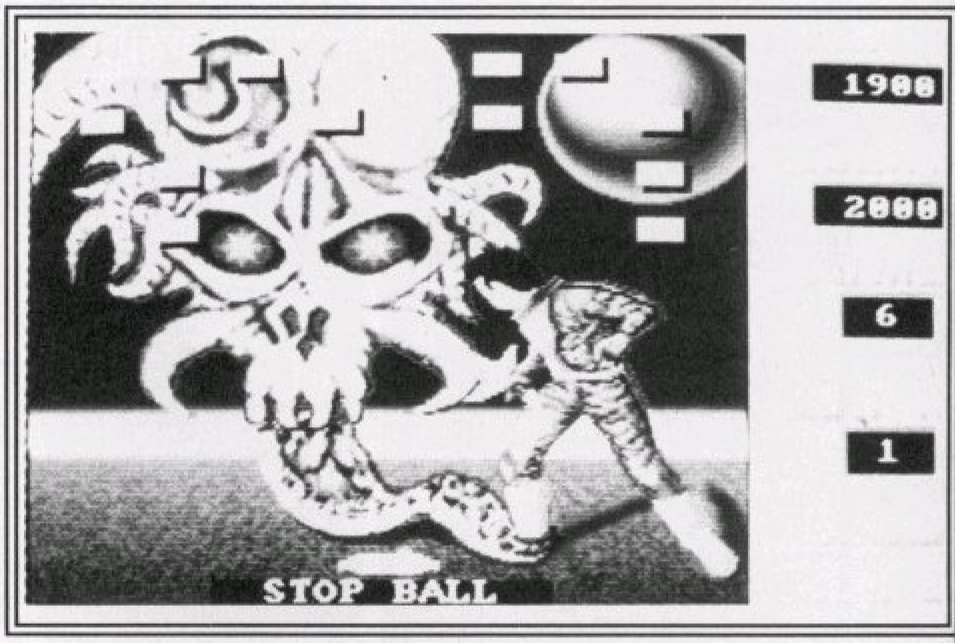


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BALL RAIDER



The year is 2488, *Ball Raider* is the ultimate challenge for the "Guild of Warriors", it says on the packaging. I have news for Diamond Games: it was also the ultimate challenge for a lot of arcade visitors fourteen years ago. For *Ball Raider* turns out to be nothing more or less than that hardy perennial *BreakOut* in one of its many disguises.

There's a lot of *BreakOut* about on the Amiga these days. First there was *Impact*, then *Arkanoid* appeared, courtesy of Discovery Software, and now we have *Ball Raider*.

Ball Raider doesn't have a great deal to commend it over the others. A bit on graphics, with the use of background stills to the playing area depicting sci-fi style tableaux of alien-crushing and galactic exploration. Then the high score table is produced by a muscle-bound Greek God type, who grinds his teeth and flashed his eyes as the high scores fade in and out in fetching dark blue. Or, for some reason, in red if you keep the fire button pressed.

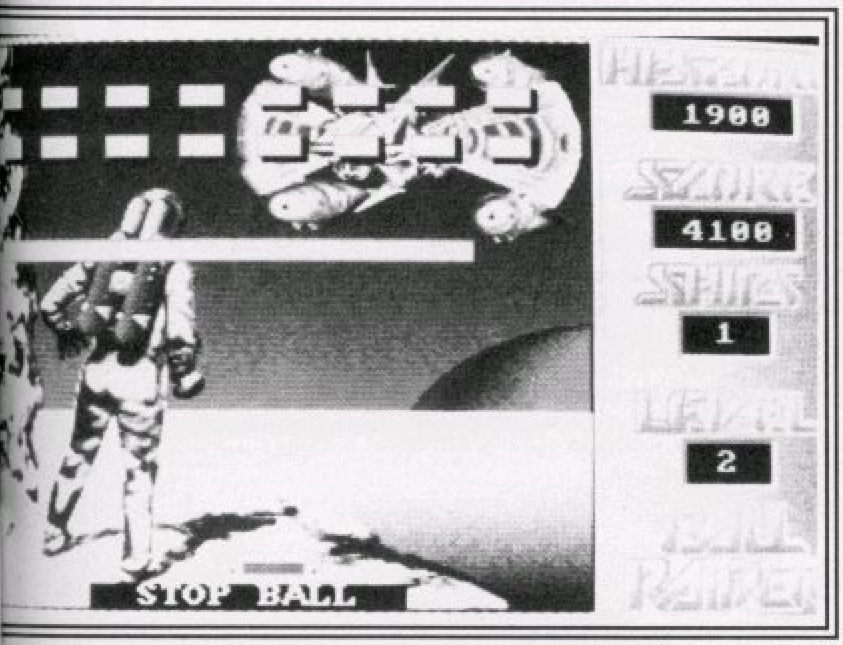
You might want to keep the fire button pressed as well because you are irritatingly forced to enter your name after every single game, and view the high scores, whether you make it to the table or not, and holding on to Fire speeds through it as quickly as possible.

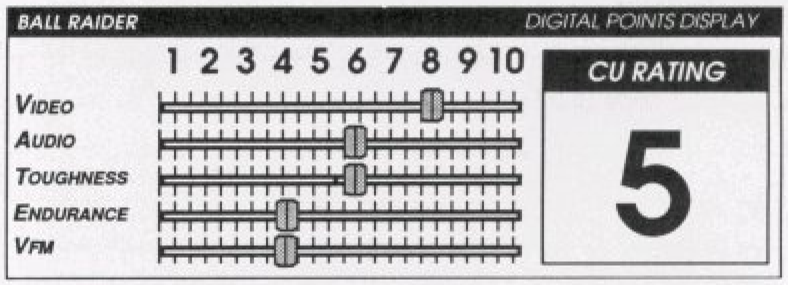
As for the gameplay, well, it's *BreakOut* over 25 screens. Sometimes the ball goes fast, sometimes it goes slow, sometimes you get an extra life, sometimes an interesting grey vertical stripe appears on the right hand side of the screen and obliterates the score and lives left table. I haven't see this feature in *BreakOut* before, and I suspect that Diamond Games missed it when they were bug-hunting as well. Other stripes also appear on screen from time to time and although they don't interfere with gameplay, they are of equal curiosity value.

The sound effects amount to clunks for hitting the bricks and whooshes for bouncing them off your bat. These are in addition to the background music, which although not objectionable, is extremely repetitive.

Ball Raider doesn't have anything like the number of extra features which made *Impact* and *Arkanoid* such interesting variants on a very old game format. For die-hard *BreakOut* collectors only.

Christine Erskine





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Time Bandit goes prehistoric — circa Pacmanzoid period.

TIME BANDIT

AMIGA

Amiga Price: £19.95/disk

When this game was first released for the ST — and you must remember that it was one of the first games available for that machine — it seemed to have everything a games devotee could have dreamed for. Excellent graphics, good sound effects, an enormous playing area, and a resemblance to *Gauntlet*, the game of the time.

Time Bandit was even acclaimed as 'The best game ever' by one American computer mag. I too, was impressed when I received the ST version. Nearly two years later, however, I find it more difficult to summon up such enthusiasm for the Amiga version. Microdeal have compacted the storyline into one and a half small pages. The aim of the game is to travel around time, entering and exiting castles, and despatching villains along the way.

The basic concept of the game owes a great deal to *Gauntlet* but unlike *Garrison, Time Bandit* does not aim to mimic; rather it takes the ideas of simultaneous play and walking around mazes collecting jewels and expands them. Instead of one maze leading to another, *Time Bandit* allows the player to choose which maze to enter, and the contents of that maze can range from standard *Gauntlet* screens, to *Pac-man* games, right through to invisible barriers.

As with *Garrison*, only two players can actually play the game simultaneously — a limitation originally set on the ST and unfortunately not changed on the Amiga version. But the biggest difference between *Time Bandit* and most *Gauntlet* clones is that you play on separate parts of the screen, and only see each other on your own screen when you pass each other within the maze. Another difference is that when one player finishes the maze the other does automatically.

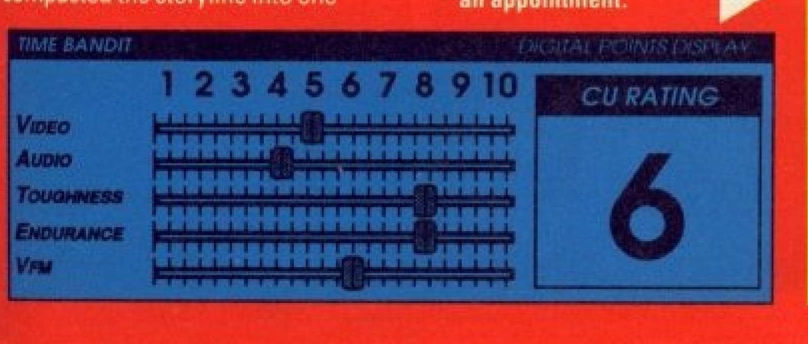
The graphics are, as we have come to expect from most ST-Amiga conversions, almost identical to the ST version. That said, they are still colourful and do the game justice. The sound effects and animation, however, are not good at all. Apart from the odd bang and splat there is a noticable absence of any good sound effects, and the animation is actually worse than the original.

These criticisms apart, *Time Bandit* is essentially a good game. People who have not played the original and who like the idea of a true arcade adventure (and by that I mean a game that contains elements of arcade games, adventure games, and anything in between) will find *Time Bandit* an enjoyable and refreshing change from the plethora of shoot-'em-ups that seem to be available at the moment. Mind you there's always *Garrison*.

Ian J Frogsac



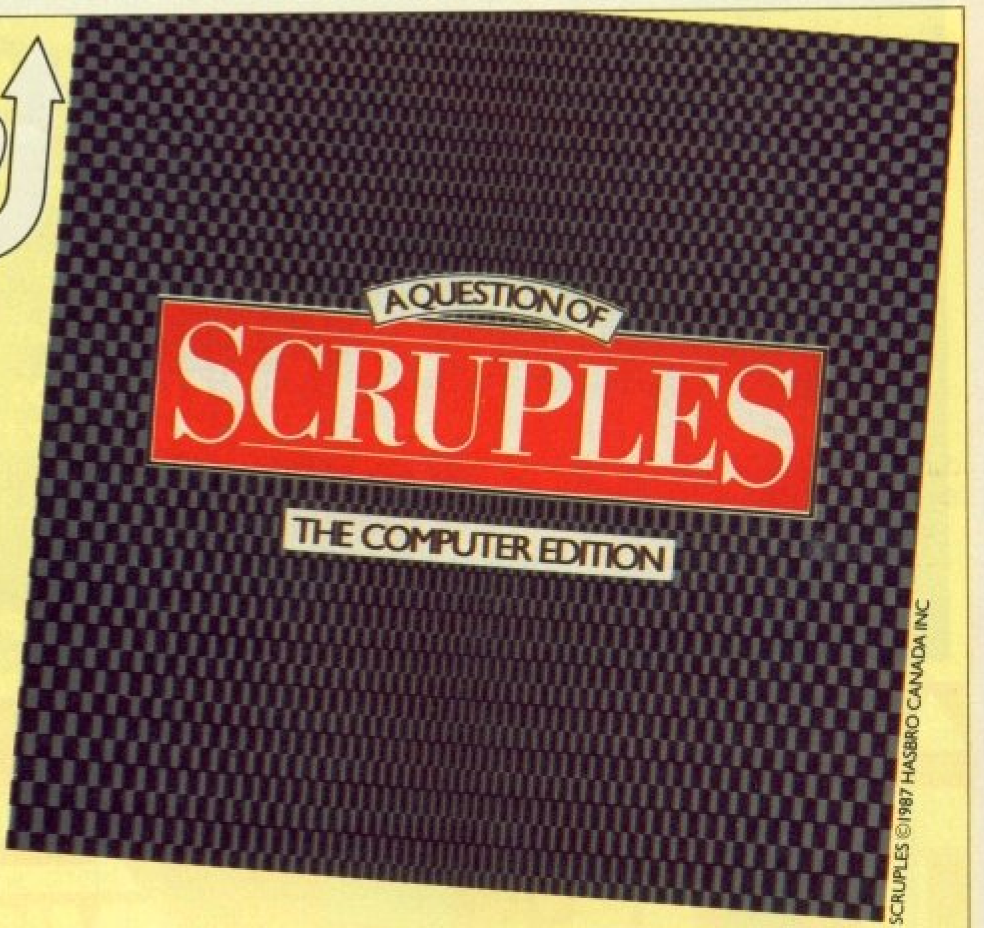
A more Gauntlety screen.





Time Bandit — late for an appointment.





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The computer interpretation is ingenious and funny. Up to ten people can play: all human, all computer, or any combination. There is a minimum of 64 characters to choose from, each with simulated 'intelligence'. Real players must 'adjust' their personalities and select their appearance from a gallery of faces provided. A minimum of 230 leading questions are built-in and no game will ever be the same.

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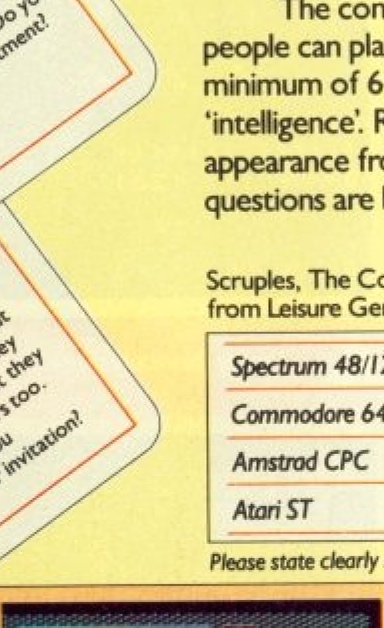
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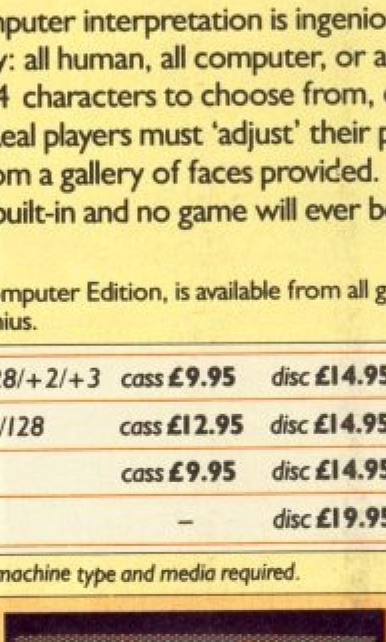
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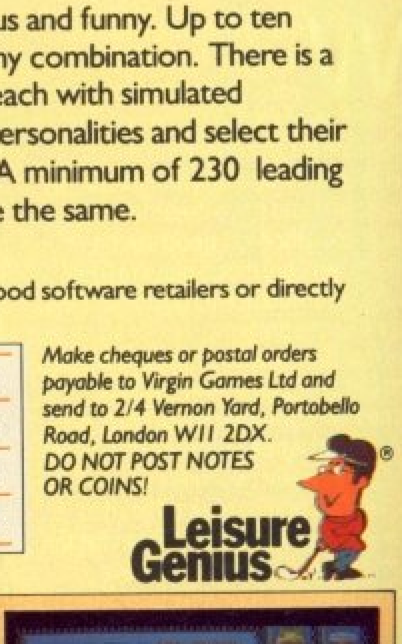
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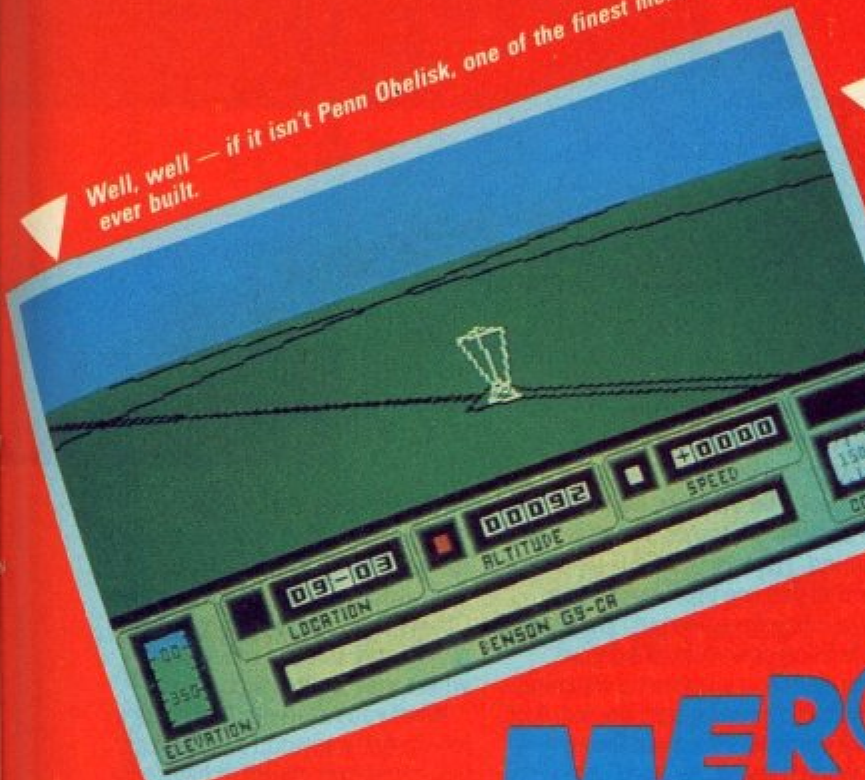
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Well, well — if it isn't Penn Obelisk, one of the finest monuments ever built.



An oil rig in the park . . .?



MERCENARY

Amiga
Novagen
Price: £19.95 disk
£14.95 disc

It was just over three years ago that Paul Woakes, the little known author of the brilliant *Battlezone* variant *Encounter*, wrote a program to generate fast moving 3D vector graphics on the Atari 800. A year and much hype later and the routine had developed into a game — an arcade adventure called *Mercenary* which rapidly received all manner of acclaim when it was released.

Now, two years since it first appeared on the 64, this timeless classic has made it to the Amiga, along with its psuedo sequel *The Second City*. In fact, Novagen have bundled the two masterpieces together with *The Targ Survival Kit* to form the definitive *Mercenary Compendium*.

For the uninitiated, the action takes place on the planet Targ, inhabited by two alien species — the Polyers and the Mechanoids — who are locked in constant conflict. Having crash-landed, your sole objective is to escape — basically you have to acquire, by fair means or foul, a ship capable of breaking away from Targ's gravitational pull.

The most obvious route to success seems to be acting as a mercenary for one of the two sides at war. However, it soon becomes apparent that the best approach is to pick up any objects found on your travels and sell them to the side that pays the most. For example, the Useful Armament would certainly be at home in the Armoury, while the Medical Supplies are more suited to the confines of the Infirmary. But whose?

A bulk of playing time is spent exploring the large tunnel network deep beneath Targ's major city, with the occasional puzzle to solve and the knowledge that there's always a few special cheats to discover. The beauty of *Mercenary* is that you can play it at your own pace and there are very few annoying restrictions imposed.

Hovering above the city is the Palyar colony complex, which is worth a look as it houses many interesting rooms and items — provided you can find suitable transport to fly there. There are half a dozen different craft available, ranging from slow, ground-based vehicles to super-fast jets. There's also a very unusual (and useful) craft (or should I say Kraft) lying around — if you can sniff it out.

Apart from a few neat tweaks (like the ability to run) the gameplay in this 16-bit incarnation is identical to its forerunner's. But overall it's better, only because the graphics are so smooth, fast and utterly exhilarating. I can't think of a flight simulation which provides the same thrill as this does during flight.

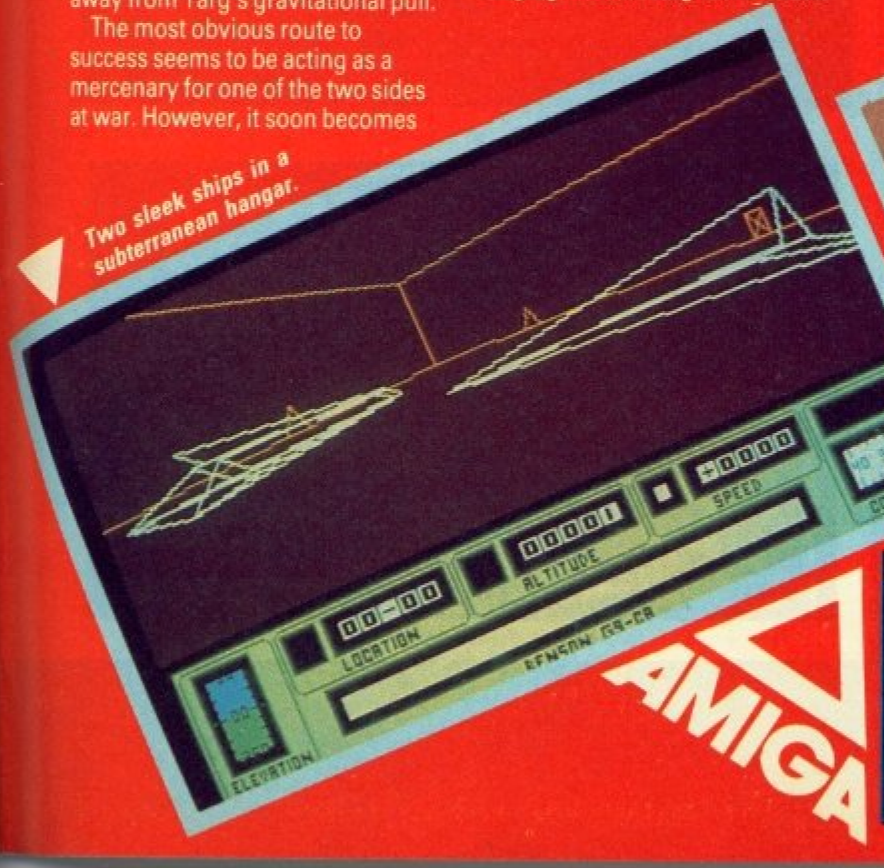
Mercenary is certainly a worthy investment for Amiga owners after something more than a short, sharp burst of fun. Both *Mercenary* and *The Second City* (which is basically more of the same, only harder) will keep you busy for weeks (unless you've already played and completed other versions), and more than make up for the current drought of quality Amiga software.

Gary Penn



One of the more unusual structures found in the Second City.

Two sleek ships in a subterranean hangar.

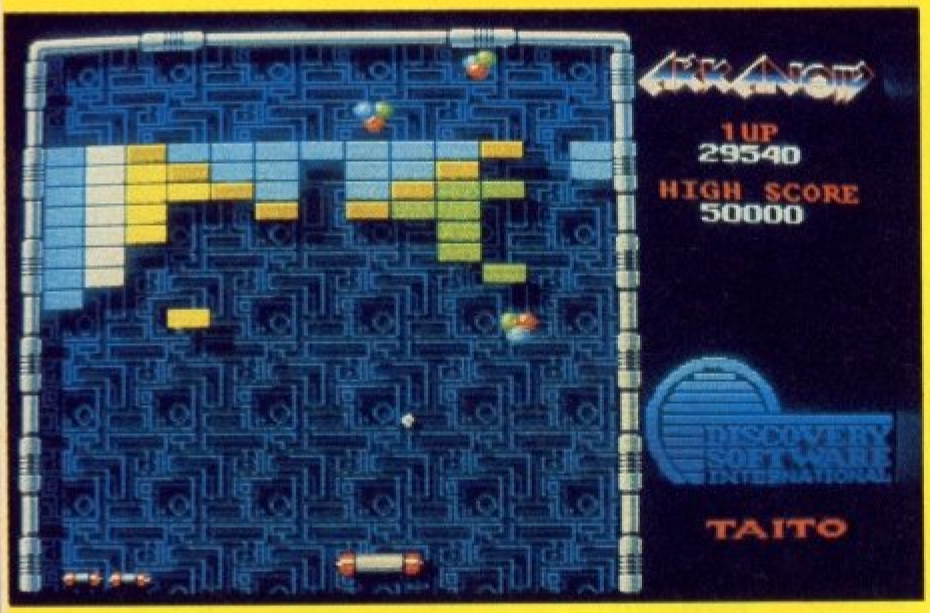


AMIGA

MERCENARY — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	9
Audio	3
Toughness	8
Endurance	8
VFM	8

CU RATING: 8



Amiga
Discovery
Sorfware
Price: $49

ARKANOID

Bounce hungry arcade enthusiasts will have been drumming their keyboards restlessly at the complete lack of any decent *Breakout* style games on the Amiga. The clones which have appeared for it are all without exception pretty shabby copes of the original. Now you have your chance with this imported version of the Taito coin-op which revived it all in the first place. But at a price.

It strikes me as wholly unnecessary to describe the plot (the capsule warped in time somewhere bit) or the gameplay (knock bricks out) to anyone reading this. The game has appeared on just about every format and in every conceivable shape since it was released just over a year ago.

What might be of more use to perfectionists among you is to tell you just how close it is to the coin-up for your money.

To all intents and purposes Discovery's version is arcade perfect. The graphics are as close as makes no difference and so is the sound. The most obvious difference is that you use the mouse. Now that's fine for some but I always find the thing gets stuck at a crucial moment and you end up watching the ball disappear past the bat. A bit like England's batsman facing Richard Hadlee. As a dedicated paddle user on the 64 version I would like to have seen the same concession.

Unlike the definitive Ocean version you only get three lives on this one. You also have the option to control the speed of the ball by pressing keys 1-6. Quite why anyone would want any speed other than the natural one I'm not sure, since the game isn't as hard as the original or the 64. The reason I say that is because you seem to get more bonus capsules than is usual. In particular there seem to be a plentiful supply of lasers, a bonus rarer than a good T'Pau record on Dave Collier's Commodore version. Cheats who don't like some of the first twenty screens can choose where they want to start as well.

What you have with Discovery's job on *Ark* is as good a version as you could ever expect to have on a home computer. Any criticisms are really only nitpicking. The one thing you don't have on it is an affordable price. You have to have money to burn to buy it. An obscene amount of money. It's also not easy to come by. Meanwhile 64 owners can revel in the fact that they possess a game that, bug'n all, is as good as the Amiga version and nearly a quarter of the price.

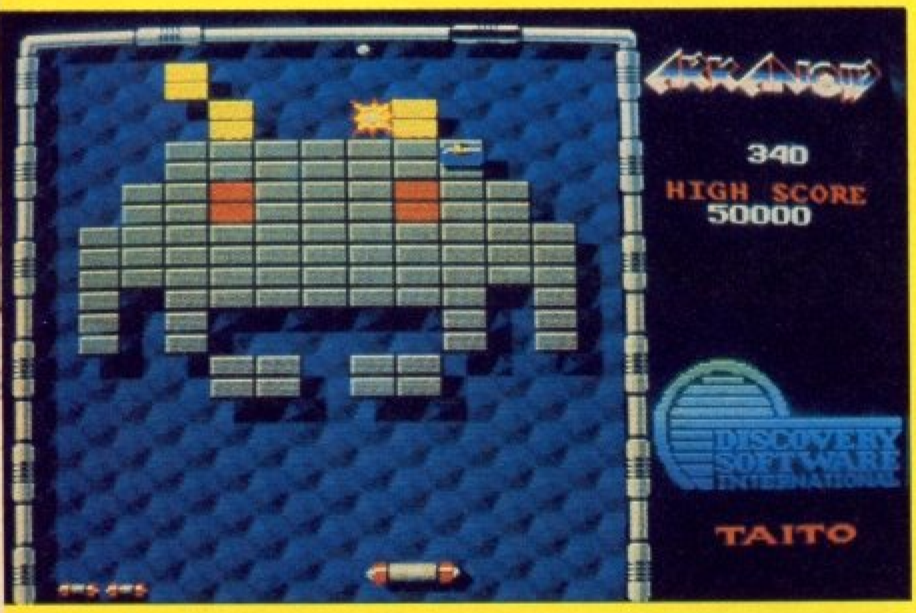
Mike Pattenden

AMIGA

Arcanoid — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

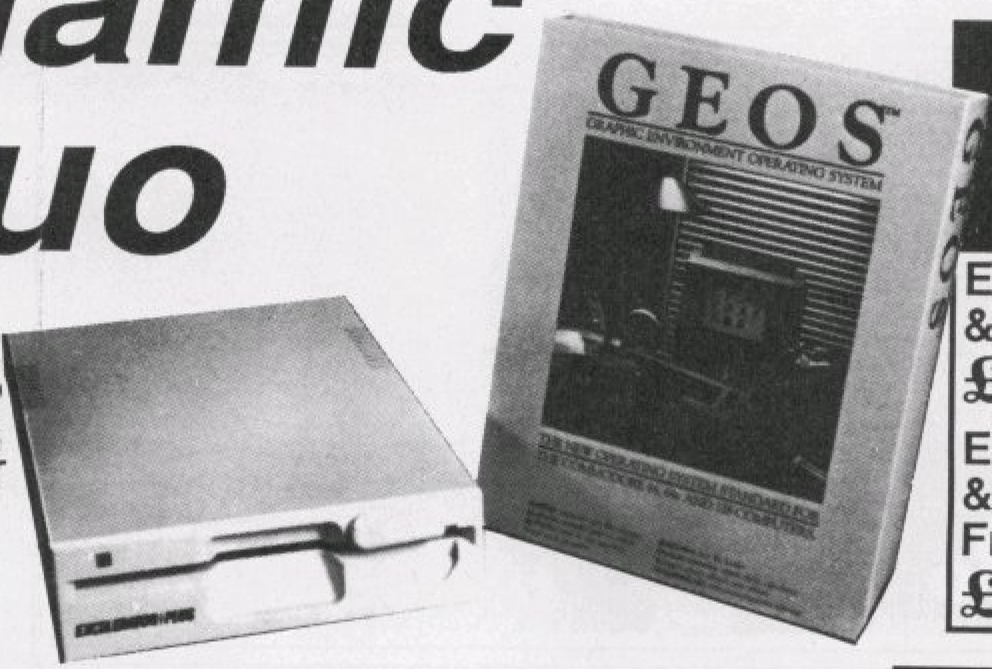
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Video	
Audio	
Toughness	
Endurance	
VFM	

CU RATING: 7





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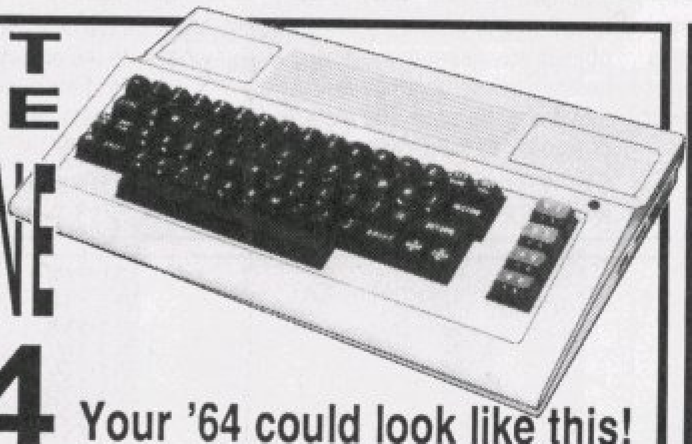
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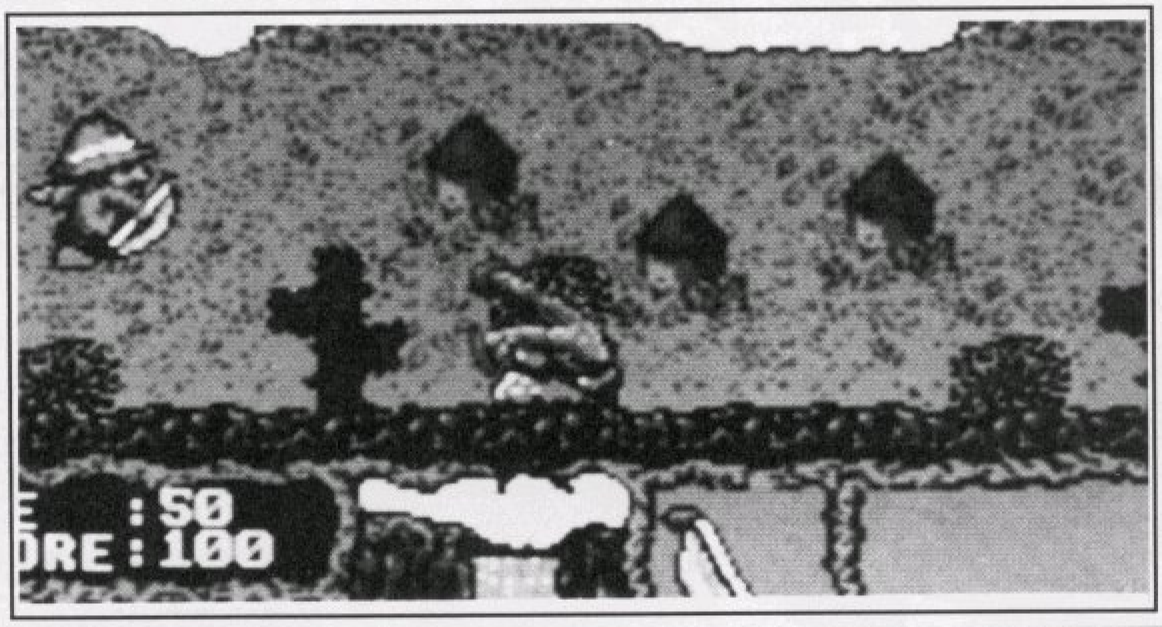
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TERRAMEX

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Arcade adventures of the 'explore terrain, avoid the nasties and collect strange objects' gendre have come a long way since *Jet Set Willy*, and Amiga versions can display a remarkable amount of detail and solidarity to the characters and items within a game.

Terramex is just one such example. The playing strategy is good old platforms and ladders, but clear bold graphics and a pervasive sense of groansome humour make it a pleasure to play.

The plot goes like this: an asteroid is hurtling towards earth, and only Professor Eyestrain can deflect it. Mission: find Eyestrain, who is holed up in the desert somewhere and hasn't been seen for twenty odd years. You can choose to 'be' one of five characters to go off in search of the Professor, and if you find him, to get the right bits and bobs to put his asteroid deflecting machine together.

You'll need to use plenty of other objects found strewn along the landscape simply in order to get about; a vacuum cleaner which enables you to fly certain screens, a flute which will charm otherwise deadly snakes; a political manifesto which will power a hot air balloon (manifesto . . . full of hot air . . . geddit?)

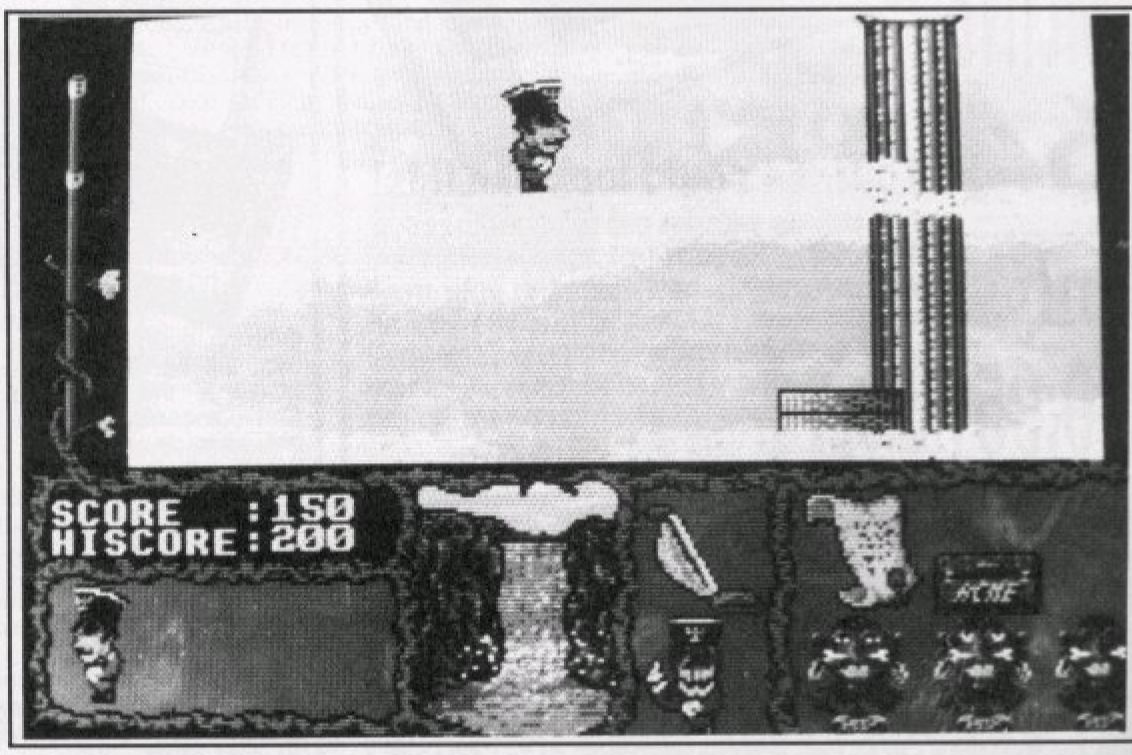
Don't worry about not being able to carry all this stuff, an army of bearers lugs it along behind you. To use an object, scroll through your bearers to get the object you want closest to you, and then swap items with him. A considerable amount of lateral thinking is required, however, to match each object to its correct purpose.

Thanks to the large, clear graphics, you don't have to spend time trying to puzzle out what the objects are meant to represent, before you can begin guessing how they might be used. The picture design is of a bold, cartoon car icature style, rather than attempting anything sophisticated, but no less pleasing for that.

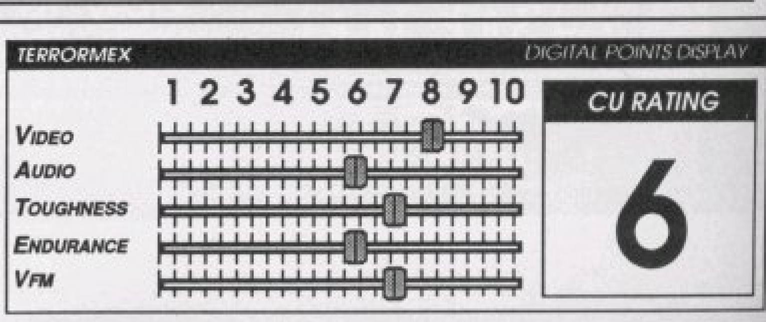
Also caricatured are the explorer figures. Programmers (ex-Gremlin men Shaun Hollingworth and Pete Harrup) have gone mercillessly for stereotypes circa Zulu Dawn. Thankfully, Benn Daglish's soundtrack doesn't attempt anything similarly jingoistic, it just bounces along in the background.

For all that, *Terramex* is good fun, though the humour is extremely corny, and it certainly isn't easy, what with the object manipulation puzzles to chew over, pterodactyls, cloud droplets, man-eating plants, reptiles and the like around to pulverise you.

Christine Erskine



Aah! Cloud nine!





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▲ Mugged, by a Grandad.

you visit it, and shows your current strength, indicated by a flowering vine, which is rejuvenated whenever you eat or successfully solve a puzzle. Let the vine wither and you die a premature death.

Playing the game is largely a matter of noting where objects are, exploring (it's all mappable) and working out how to use what you've collected. Hence the similarity to a conventional adventure. Y'in Hsi is also capable of a few basic martial arts moves to ward off immediately hostile characters, but this takes up a lot of strength and makes the flowering vine wilt at a remarkable rate. Beware, too, of hanging around for too long in any one location, or the improbably named Hoppy the Goblin appears and bites your ankles, which doesn't do too much for your strength either.

GOLDEN PATH

Golden Path
Amiga
Firebird
Price: £19.95

Beautiful graphics may be no guarantee of an excellent game, but they do help, and Firebird's *Golden Path* has wonderfully detailed and atmospheric pictures a-plenty. Despite the game being an ST conversion, taking place over these 40 beautifully illustrated screens, and there being no text input required at all, it plays more or less as a straight adventure, rather than as an arcade game.

You play Y'in Hsi, rightful heir to the land. Before you can become the emperor, however, you must traverse the golden path, in order to achieve true enlightenment. In your travels, you find objects, and meet characters with whom you must interact, help, or fight. Solve all the 50 puzzles concerning what to do with each charcter and object, and you get to light the sacred incense and take up your imperial duties.

Collecting and using the objects is controlled in icon fashion — a series of boxes at the bottom of the screen show what you have collected so far, depicts the Book of Knowledge, which describes each location as

GOLDEN PATH — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

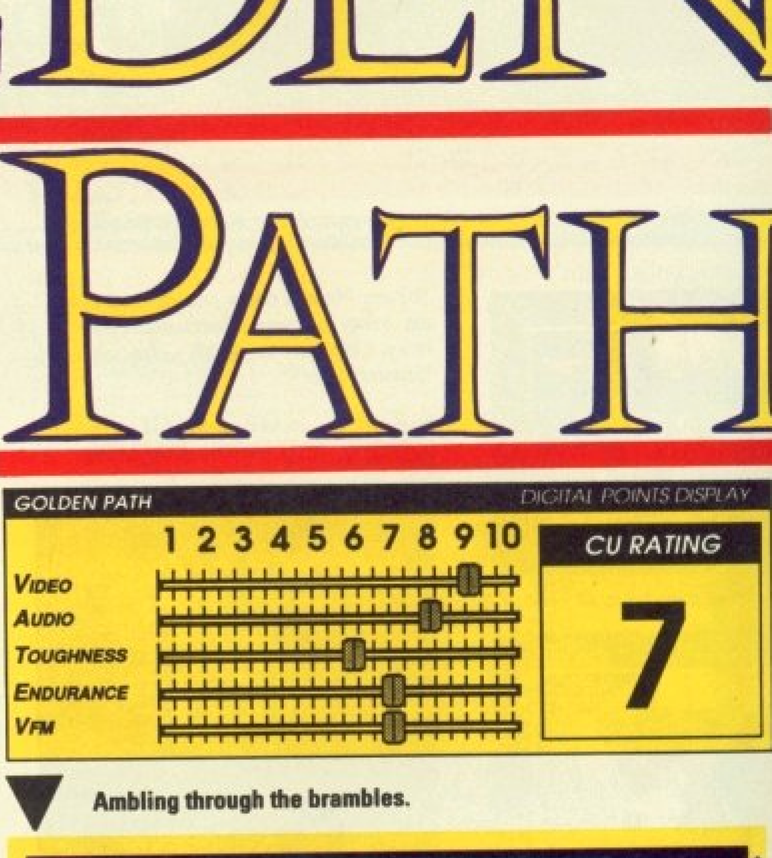
VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING
7

▼ The big Y'in takes the aquatic route.

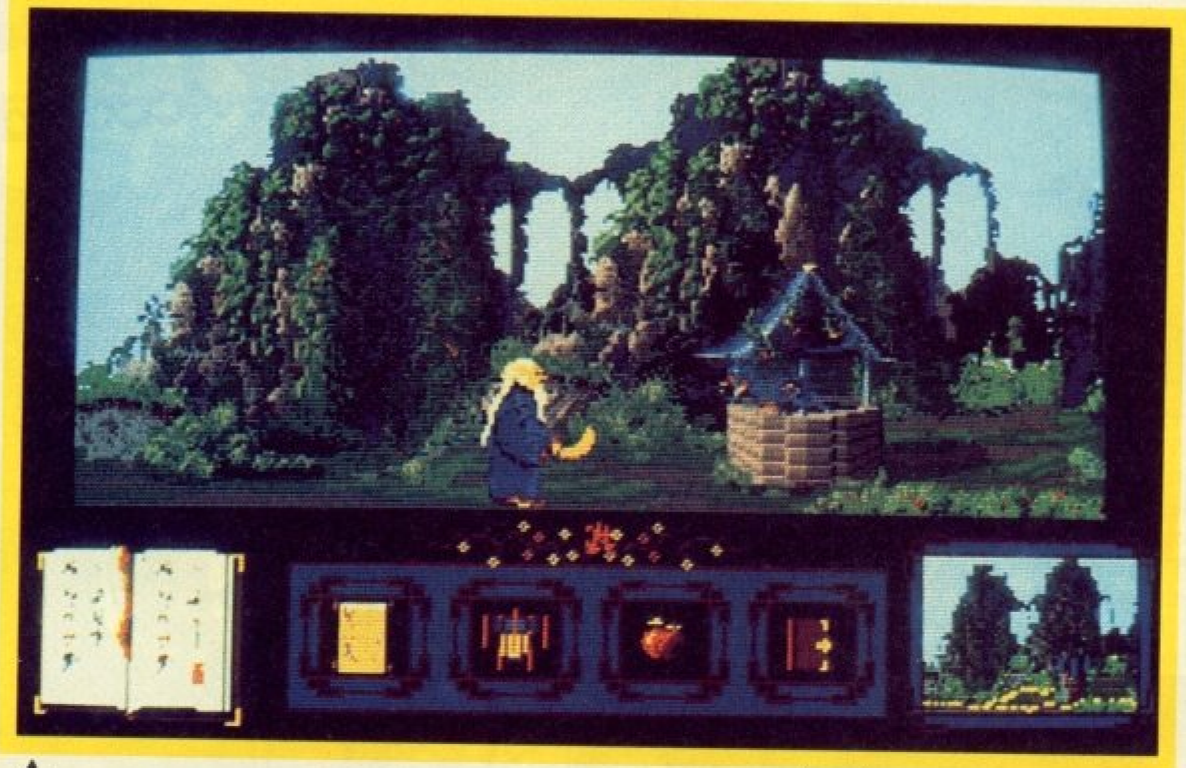


▼ Ambling through the brambles.



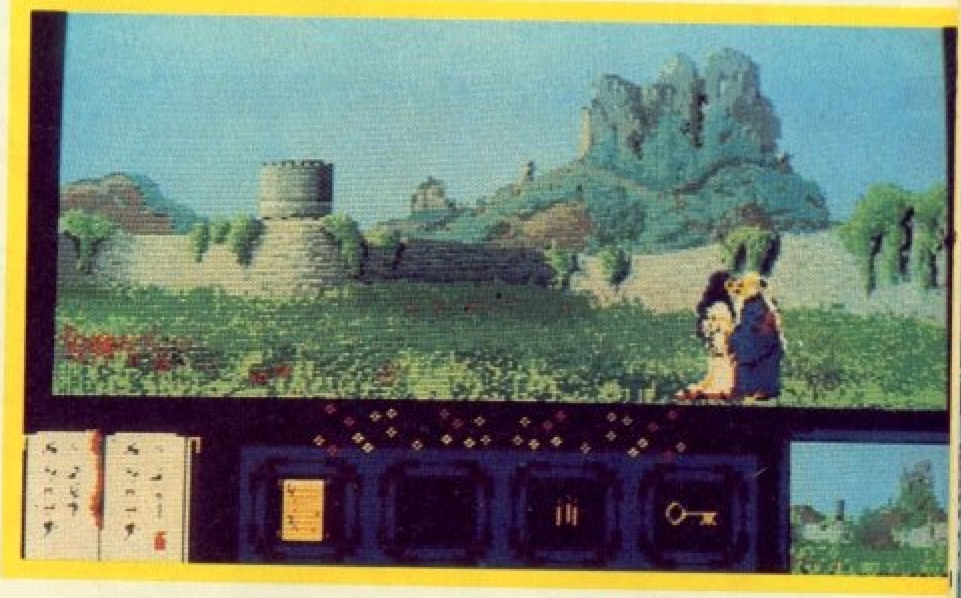
The puzzles vary from tricky but straightforward to very easy — if you've got a dragon with a thorn in his foot and a pair of tweezers lying around just a couple of locations away, it's not too hard to work out your next move. And your ability to progress is often determined by which puzzles you've already solved.

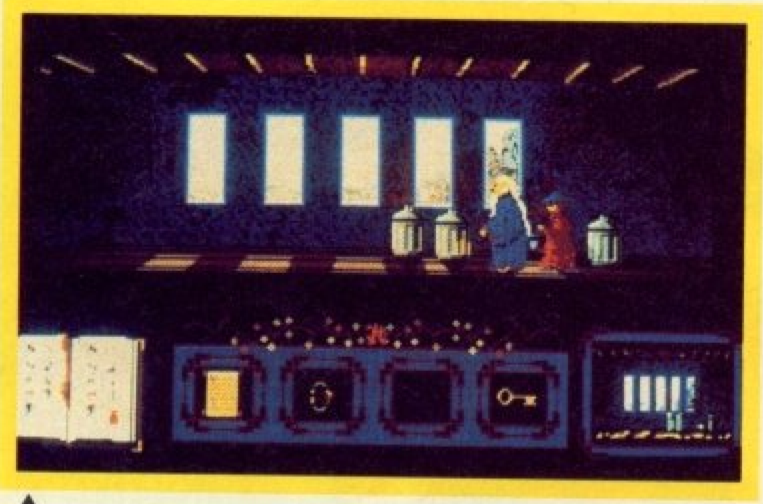
The gameplay, then, is very simple: a pictorial adventure game, and a program that will appeal far more to orthodox adventure fans than anyone else. However, it's an adventure dressed up in very fine clothes indeed. The mouse control and use of icons, once you've got the hang of it, mean that you can speedily move and manipulate Y'in Hsi and the objects in his pockets. The continual soundtrack is a classy oriental-style series of tunes with



Hardly a wishing well.

Even Fogies have some fun.





It's the honourable bin room.

A little but chilly round the sandals.



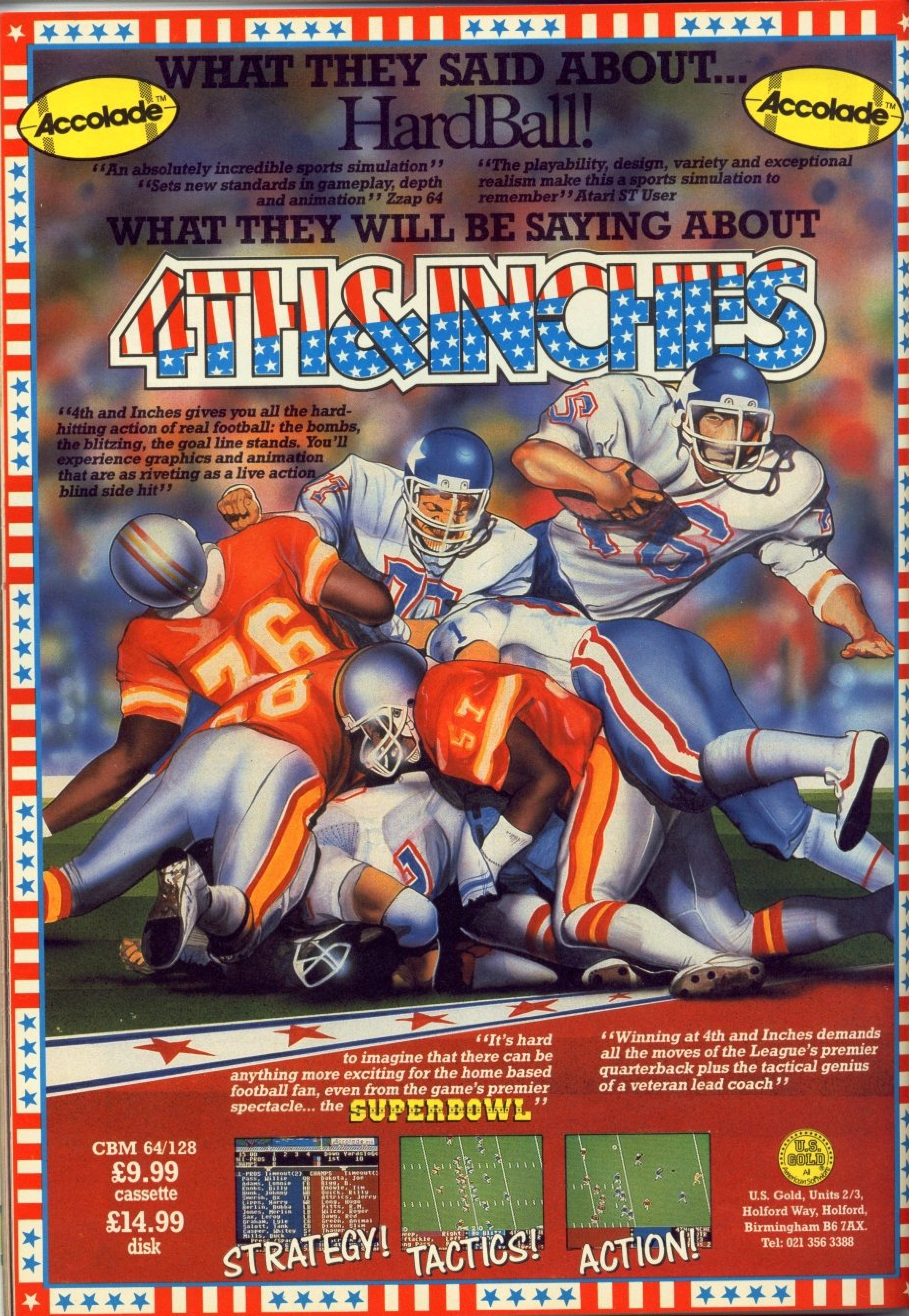
AMIGA

plenty of variation.

And the graphic backdrops are truly superb; lovely detailed scenes of budding mimosa bushes, ornate pagodas, animated flickering firelight, typically oriental looking landscapes. It all goes to make *Golden Path* probably the prettiest Amiga game yet. I have just one gripe on the graphic front — why did Firebird put the text location descriptions in dark blue on a black background?

Christine Erskine

AMIGA



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INTO THE VALLEY

BY KEITH CAMPBELL

BORDER ZONE

64/128
Infocom/ Activision
Price: £24.99/ disk

The convention of the spy thriller á la 'The Third Man' has come to the 64 via Infocom. The plot shifts and changes over a series of chapters in which the player adopts a number of roles.

Chapter 1 — The Train. An American businessman returning from the Eastern state of Frobnia, to Vienna, your train is nearing the border at Litzenburg. Suddenly, an American agent staggers into your compartment, bleeding profusely from a gunshot wound, and thrusts a document in your hand. "Deliver this to my contact, who will bump into you at Ostnitz station," he implores. "He will say 'Pardon me.' To this you must reply 'It is my fault.'" Pinning a white carnation on you for recognition purposes, and telling you your task is vital to prevent the assassination of an American diplomat, he staggers out.

Before long, the train is being searched for the agent, and every passenger is interrogated. The secret document will do you no good if you are still clutching it when the man in the trench coat arrives! On reaching the border at Ostnitz, trench-coats conducts a thorough search of the train and baggage . . . How you deliver the vital information to the contact forms the basis of this Chapter, which in hindsight, turns out to be quite short, albeit complex.

Chapter 2 — The Border. Now you are the wounded American spy who passed you the document in Chapter 1. Fleeing from the train before it reached the border station, you are on the run in a hostile land and must cross the border. To help you, a map of the countryside is supplied in the package.

Bleeding, freezing cold in the snow, and pursued by dogs, you make for a hut in the forest clearing. Let's hope its occupants are friendly . . .

Chapter 3 — The Assassination. Now you are a KGB agent — the one from whom the American agent received the document. You have been sent to Ostnitz to supervise the assassination, and keep the Kremlin's name out of it. But in fact you are a double agent and must prevent it from happening without blowing your cover.

Border Zone marks yet another departure from the usual Infocom style. Apart from being the first Infocom spy thriller, more significantly it is their first adventure played in real time. Until now, the clock has stopped ticking whilst the player thinks. In *Border Zone*, time does not stand still — except when you use the PAUSE command.

Furthermore, *Border Zone* is in three chapters. Each chapter is basically a separate mini-adventure, but three minis don't manage the same depth and complexity of one single game of the same overall size.

Like *Nord and Bert, Border Zone* has built-in Invisiclues. Type HINT, and you get a pick-list of clues appropriate to the chapter you're playing. Select one, and a sequence of hints, in order of increasing helpfulness, is presented. At any time during the sequence you can QUIT the hint section and return to where you left off in the game.

Written by Infocom founder and co-author of *Zork,* Marc Blank, *Border Zone* doesn't disappoint in its puzzles — I love those where the game is (nearly) always one step ahead of me! The typical Infocom humour is there, too, in the trench-coated man who tries to light a cigarette while he interrogates you, and fails dismally. Not funny? Try lighting a match from the Frobnian Railway matchbook supplied with the pack!

But the game was spoiled for me in two ways. Firstly, the way it was split into three chapters. However well done it is (and it is well done), the game immediately loses impact. Surely, it might have been one of those three parter GACked games on tape — and THEY come at less than half the price.

More instrumental in spoiling the game for me, was the inclusion of Invisiclues. In *Nord and Bert,* basically a guessing game, they worked well, but in *Border Zone* the trouble is they are there! It is all very well saying 'You don't have to look at them' but you know and I know that when you're stuck you *will* use them, instead of doing what you should do to get the most out of the game — leave the computer alone for a while and puzzle through the problem logically, until inspiration hits you. So instead of a real mystery, you get access to an open book. This spoiled *Border Zone* for me, and led to the low Puzzleability Rating, which would otherwise have ranked about 8.

By the time *Beyond Zork* is released, four in a row of Infocom's games will have been 'different' from the standard adventure which gave Infocom its high standing amongst adventure players. And there's Infocomix to come. Innovation and experiment in adventure formats is to be welcomed, but not in EVERY release, please, Infocom. *Border Zone* is good, but like *Nord and Bert,* and *Plundered Hearts,* it has failed to get those top Va... ratings at one time almost guaranteed for an Infocom adventure. When can we have some more like *Stationfall, Lurking Horror,* and *Leather Goddesses?*

FOOTNOTE

A word of warning about the 64 version. If, like mine, your pack contains only a 128 operating card, note that the way to start up the game on a 64 is different. You must type LOAD "STORY", 8 and then type RUN aT the READY prompt. Also, some copies of the 64 version are bugged. This manifests itself by preventing use of the SAVE command (extremely useful in Border Zone***) and causes the computer to lock up. Then the whole game must be reloaded from scratch before play can continue. Activision think that all faulty copies have been taken out of circulation, but should you find you have one, take it back to your supplier and ask for a replacement.***

Graphics .. N/A
Playability .. 9
Puzzleability .. 6
Overall ... 8

INTO THE VALLEY

BY KEITH CAMPBELL

FEDERATION

CRL/ Smart Egg Software 64/128 Price cass/£9.95 disk £14.95.

Federation is a space adventure in which your ship has crashed into another, the Quann Tulla, whilst attempting to dock with her. The designer of the ship, Erra Quann, has hijacked it, and plans to take it out to an enemy empire to sell the secrets of its engines. Your quest is to recover the engine manuals from the Quann Tulla, destroy the ship to prevent it from falling into enemy hands, and then teleport to the surface of a nearby planet, where a means of escape awaits you.

If the ship's name is familiar to you, then it may come as no surprise to learn that Federation is a completely re-written version of Eight Day Software's original text adventure Quann Tulla, one of the early Spectrum Quilled adventure, subsequently converted for Amstrad and C-64.

When I say 're-written', I mean completely re-written. The original storyline is there, and well recognisable, but the text has been substantially improved, and some of the objects and puzzles shifted around a bit.

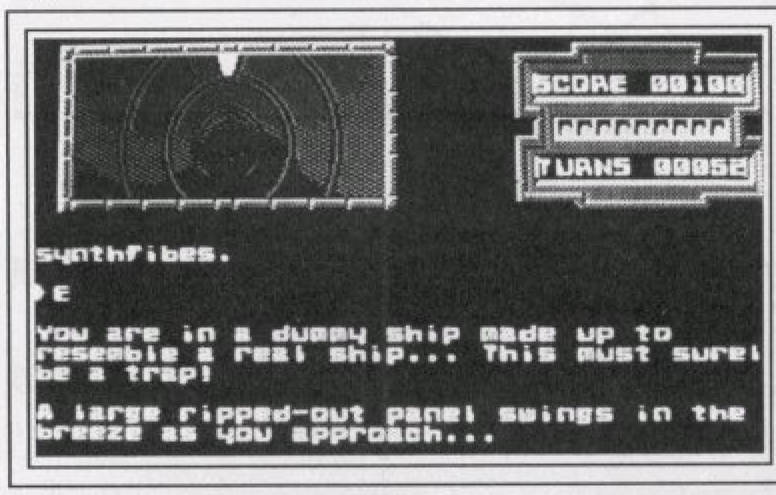
The original was text only, but now graphics have been added, in the form of a box about two-thirds the width and one third the height of the screen, and they are very quick to display. To the right of this is a scoreboard, showing the current score and number of turns taken. The score is out of a staggering 10,000 (so far I have only seen zeroes in the two rightmost positions) with some points awarded for displaying extra initiative. Thus it is possible to complete the game with less than a full score.

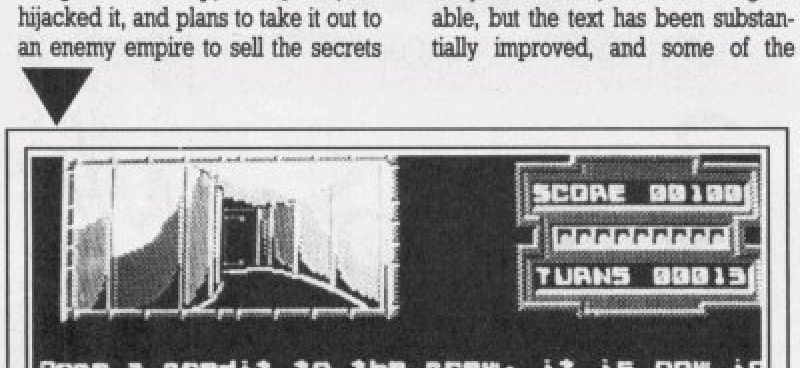
Right at the start you are pitched into a problem — you can't breathe. Your ship is leaking, and smoke and sparks are all around from the crash. Only a few moves are allowed for you to find and put on the Natuflow Airmask. This is the first of a series of objects, like the sulphurtab, and a tube of permaglue, that combine with the tight opening to make Federation somewhat reminiscent of *Kayleth.*

Multi-word sentences are supported, together with a RAMSAVE and RAMLOAD facility.

The game is spoiled only by one or two minor points. Because the message given when an unrecognised word is entered conceals the fact that it is invalid, confusion can set in where the vocab is not too obvious. For example, trying to take the airmask gave me THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE — I should have used MASK instead of AIRMASK. Another small point was the description of a tube dangling in space failing to change after I had successfully contacted it to the Quann Tulla.

Otherwise an excellent adventure — pity about the price!





Graphics.. 8
Playability.. 8
Puzzleability.. 7
Overall ... cass. 7
disk 5

BENEATH FOLLY

The Fiend 64/128 Price: £3.99 cass

Here is an adventure full of rather abstract but deviously logical puzzles — the sort that almost defy solution, yet are manifestly obvious with hindsight.

Set in the caves beneath Folly Hill, inhabited by the dreaded Faringdon Fiend, you start off trapped in the middle of a pentagram. Step out of it, and the fading sounds of Fiendish laughter will be the last thing you hear. To make matters worse, you are carrying nothing to start with! Or

does that, perhaps, actually help?

Even leaving the pentagram does not really get you under way, for now the booby-trapped crack in the wall disappears, really leaving you with nothing! But there are clues all around, if only you take the trouble to look for them, and recognise them as such. Next, a breathtaking sideways logical step is required to, unlikely though it may seem, apply the same rules to all that flows from your first big discovery!

If that sounds vague and complicated, all I can say is, you will understand what I mean when you've achieved it in the game!

Being a game written by a Fiend, it is not surprising that it is populated with demons, each complete with viscious fangs and claws, ready to tear you to shreds at the slightest of false moves. Each can be satisfied with the object of his desires, but it is you who must discover exactly what that is, and then produce it from somewhere!

This is a GACed adventure with graphics which are hardly Magnetic Scrolls' standard, but they do have meaning, and they contain clues. On the reverse side of the tape is Fiend music, which to be appreciated to the full, should be played on a system with a bit of power, and turned up to full volume, whilst you are struggling through the game.

For those Valley readers not in the know, The Fiend, author of this diabolical piece, has a regular spot in the adventure column of our sister magazine, Computer + Video Games. Having plagued me with sarcastic and insulting anonymous letters for over two years, his venom has now been turned around to complain about the worst in adventure, and insult software houses, chain stores, and fools, which he refuses to suffer gladly. He does with as much relish as when he is devouring a maiden.

A full solution is enclosed with the game — but being written by a Fiend I suspect it is designed to sap the morale of the player, rather than give him a helping hand!

If you enjoy an exercise in pure logice, at £3.99 this shouldn't fail to please.

Beneath Folly is available mail-order from: The Fiendery, Elm Road, Faringdon, Oxfordshire.

INTO THE VALLEY

Graphics.. 7
Playability.. 8
Puzzleability.. 9
Overall... 8

QUEST FOR THE GOLDEN EGGCUP

Mastertronic/ Smart Egg Software
64/128
Price cass/£1.99

You're walking along the M5, when a Pink Panther in a pink C5 runs you over and kills you stone dead. All is black around you, when a shaft of light appears, and in it, an old man wearing a turban. "Hello, I'm God," he says. He sits down to the strains of a haunting piano melody, and lights up a mild cigar. After blowing several smoke rings, he gives you a quest to perform.

It seems his golden eggcup has been stolen, and your task is to find and return it to him. If not, he'll turn you into an egg, and eat you, probably poached. So saying, he claps his hands and vanishes in a puff of black greasy smoke.

You now find yourself in a golden temple, and there's little peace as you try to find your way about the place. God has the habit of materialising and making comments to interrupt your thoughts — like: "Being omnipotent isn't all that it's cracked up to be." When he isn't philosophising, chances are he'll materialise a solid oak stone tablet, and instead of getting on with things, you'll probably spend hours examining it, reading it, and doing all sorts of things to it and with it for which it was never intended. Then there's Dandalf and Thoron constantly popping in and out, and making inane comments. Should you do anything about them, or are they just part of the scenery?

Before long, you find yourself armed with all sorts of strange objects, including a turban (perhaps it is the one God was wearing?) a golden robe, clipboard, jeans, slippers, magic beans, and an under-the-bed-object, which is sure to turn out very useful, if only you could decide what for.

A genuinely humourous game, this is Smart Egg's first original adventure, and for £1.99 it's a must. It has bright, pleasing to look at, and instant colour graphics, a RAMLOAD and RAMSAVE facility, and a suitably holy character set.

It is nice to see low-priced quality adventures on cassette, and this one is every bit a good as Smart Egg's first Mastertronic release, *Rigel's Revenge*. Go out and buy one!

Graphics.. 8
Playability.. 8
Puzzleability.. 7
Overall... 9.

INTO THE VALLEY

INTO THE VALLEY

RESCUE

So you thought you had problems? Here is another batch of Valley readers who were so desperate, they decided to write about them. Can you help? Who knows, next week it might be your turn to seek help through the Valley!

Nick Brown, alias 'the Shoe' is trying to get a reply from the Diamond crime computer in *The Sydney Affair*. All he can get is "... stupid answers like 'Addressee not applicable' ...' he complains. An Infogrammes 'adventure' is it not? Say no more! Can anyone tell him how to do it?

Andrew Macrobie of Sheffield, has been sitting in front of his computer screen, pushing boulders. This has had no effect. How can he get the clam from the top crater, in *Kobyash Naru?*

Two problems have come to the fore as currently baffling the most people, in this month's mail. Firstly, *Frankenstein*. It seems the clue I gave a few months ago, was not enough to help a number of players trying to escape the clutches of the bear. So here it is again – in plain language! (Well, almost!) The forest is a small maze. Find the dead pine tree, and climb it. The bear will approach, and to escape him, you must jump off – but make sure you time your jump well!

Second in the popularity stakes is the NET problem in *Rigel's Revenge*. This has caused much hilarity and some argument as to whether the problem should have been included, and if so, who agreed to put it in, between Smart Egg's Nigel Brooks and Said Hassan programmed the game. Look in the clues section for how to avoid the problem!

Olav Bjoernbakken cannot cross the chasm nor free the people from the laser cage in *Masters Of The Universe*. Nor could he pass from adventure to adventure in *Imagination*. to get over the latter problem, read the cassette inlay carefully Olav! Or perhaps you haven't got one....?

Jens Meyer of Pinner, is 'totally knackered' after laying awake night after night, puzzling over to adventures. I've helped him with a couple of problems, but who can finally put him to sleep by melting the wax in *Guild Of Thieves* for him?

Another non-sleeper verging on the suicidal, is *Knightmare* sufferer Lars Dybwad from Oslo. How can he open the door in Dungeon VI?

One step on from suicide is Brad Fields, currently in a morgue. When he tires to leave through the door, the adventure, *Waxworks*, comes up with a message telling him he can't do that just now. Any ideas, anyone?

If you are suffering or can recommend a good pain-killer, write to me at The Valley, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, and I'll get right back to you.

ADVENTURE CLUES

With thanks to Daniel Griffiths, Mountain Ash; Ray Smith, Milton Keynes; and Morgan Eves, Eccles-on-Sea.

RIGEL'S EVENGE:
Don't get caught in the net — there's no escape!

FRANKENSTEIN:
Cut the stoned wolf's throat.

LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS:
Wrap the baby robot in a blanket, put it in a basket, and leave the basket outside the orphanage. Enter after the matron has taken the baby.

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE:
Attack Mantanna with the sword, then examine the stalactite, for a timelink.

DODGY GEEZERS:
See Bullet Proof before leaving prison, and dial Ken for a hot tip.

GUILD OF THIEVES:
A pipe and a stopcock help with a drowning.

KNIGHT ORC:
Magically cool fire, and examine grate for extra vision.

CAUSES OF CHAOS:
Rope climbing from the telescope leads to the key.

CAMPBELL'S COMMENT

While I sit back and wait for some controversial and outrageous comments to come to mind, Campbell's Comment takes a month out, and gives YOU, the Valley readers, a chance to say what's on YOUR mind. We kick off with a letter replying to my question about what determines which adventures you buy ....

★ You asked readers to write in and tell you what makes us buy adventure games. Well, I believe it's the hype. I personally own only adventure games, my software cupboard is full of them. Of all the games you have reviewed I have only purchased *Kayleth* on the strength of your review. Don't get me wrong — I think your reviews are of the highest standard, but I prefer to buy games on my own intuition.

Sadly I think that the adventure market for cassette owners is quite limited. Recently the only cassette adventure that I have really enjoyed is Rigel's Revenge.

Daniel Griffiths,
Mountain Ash, Mid Glam.

Campbell's Comment: That's all very well, Daniel, but did you regret buying some of the games when you came to play them? And then wish you'd taken heed of reviews? And you'll be pleased to hear there's more coming from Smart Egg.

★ What you said about sales of *Kayleth* is true! Sad. We wrote a good game. We sat up nights with it and nursed it. So on the advice of our publisher, and with thoughts of paying the mortgage and other irritating realities, we went into arcade games.

Captain America was our very first project. Stefan did all the graphics and coding, and we thought we'd brought a touch of adventuring to arcades by adding clues to the gameplay. This turns out to be something the average arcade player does not want!

We had this idea that it would be fun for them to discover how things happened in the game, but the reviewers were unhappy not being told exactly how to play. Almost like a set of instructions in an adventure telling you exactly what to do with the candlestick, wet tuna fish etc. So we learned by our error that arcade players have to be told how to play.

Sometimes I believe reviewers can make or break a game, but some seem to slag games to improve their own image. I don't believe you're guilty of this, and I hope the market improves and something new and wonderful comes along in the adventuring field, to inject it with life.

Sadly it won't be produced by us, although we would love to write another adventure. So if you know anyone looking for one, do pass our name along the line.

Ann Ufnowski
Tarann Software
Bratton, Wiltshire.

Campbell's Comment: Just what adventurers thought about arcade players but never dared to say! But good reviews didn't seem to help *Kayleth*... We must have another, so come on software houses, how about commissioning a decent adventure?

★ I'm an 18 year old student at the Western languages department of Bosphorus University, and own a C-128 computer.

Nearly all the games here are pirated. But people here buy them and enjoy them. they are pretty cheap as well. Of course, I admit that's not fair, but bear in mind there is no law preventing software piracy.

This problem causes headaches to me. First of all when you are buying the game you know nothing about it. No handy information is given by the game. It's usually just a tape or a disk containing the game. Secondly, some games are not properly pirated (excuse the term). Though I completed the first parts of both *Castle Of Terror* and *Dracular*, I couldn't proceed to the next parts, because they weren't on the tape.

I buy both CU and C&VG every month regularly, and read the adventure sections first. It's a certain fact that no better articles exist in the world about adventures.

Can Ozturk
Istabul

Campbell' Comment: Hmm ... it's enough to give pirates a bad name! Best of luck with your adventure column.

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LETTERS

Poison Penn

Being an avid reader of the magazine, it is with heartfelt sorrow that we see the passing of Mr Lacey onto pastures new, and good luck to him in his new post, but what is more pitiful is the vacant position being filled by Zzap 64 reject Gary Penn. The standards at CU are obviously beginning to slip! If you take a close look at G.P.'s contribution to CU, it is blatantly clear that he would not know a good game if it hit him between the eyes. Is there no pleasing the 'boy', or is it just part of his nature to grumble at the end of a review? Thank goodness there are still some good and adult minded reviewers (Ken McMahon/Keith Campbell) with the magazine. Please try to keep the reviews up to the pre G.P. days, and not let him reduce it to the childlike quality which he produced for Zzap.

Instead of just reviews, how about an indepth look at some of the U.S. software houses that are trying to conquer the British market (Electronic Arts/ Microprose/SSI, etc), as they seem to be producing far better software than US Gold/Ocean/ Elite etc.

Well I've said my piece, and it is only fair to give you a chance to reply, so I shall read the future letters page with added fervour.
Michael Hodgson
Southampton

Gary is not a Zzap reject, he left the magazine to launch Games Machine. His knowledge of and skill at computer games is second to none. Last month he was responsible for awarding our first Superstar of the year. Is that griping? He also gave *Platoon* a Screen Star whilst pointing out why it didn't do even better. If that's grumbling expect more. CU's standards have never been higher. (*All right Gaz, you've made your point. MP.*)

Burn 'em

Your magazine is fab. No other mag has the style or quality, and gives some freebies bi-monthly. All other mags should be burnt.

You are so generous, you give away tapes, calendars, booklets but do not raise the price.

About *Out Run* (or in your case Out Nut.

1. Why haven't USG given the girl blonde hair?
2. Why haven't USG given the car an engine (there can't be with no noise)
3. Why have USG put those lines there but not on other courses? (I crash because of them).
4. They haven't given the Commodore forks in the road (the speccy has less K and has forks).
5. It is an alright racing game but to be a conversion of *Out Run* (Our Nut) . . . Huh! I hope *Road Blasters* will be a better conversion than *Out Run*. It is not the best conversion. I'll stick to *Buggy Boy*.

From the Hangley boy
Kincardinshire
Scotland

Questions we all asked ourselves.

Aaarghh!

Smash, Smash Smash! I am of course referring to the triple C (crucial, coin-op conversion) game — *Rampage*.

I am glad you reviewed this game in your mag, and I am also glad Activision have converted this T.C. (totally crucial) arcade game.

What a load of Cr★p!

I am of course refering to that total rip off of the most original game ever. Future Concepts have actually got the nerve to release *Ramparts*. I mean it's even got virtually the same name. The crew at Future Concepts should be ever so slightly massacred for their terrible injustice. No game could ever replace *Rampage*, no characters could ever be the same as George Gorilla, Ralph Wolf and Lizzie Lizard.

My only complaint is that it hasn't been converted to the C16 or the Plus 4. I had to go round to my 64 owning friend's (he's my best friend because he has a 64) to play it. When it was time for me to go I could hardly put the joystick down.

Anyway back to the point, if they can convert *Rampage* to the Spectrum 48K why can't they convert it to the Commodore Plus 4 which also has a 48K memory? So come one Activision, give us people with Plus 4's a break. Give us a really good game, I don't care about the price!
Steven Hern

Why are you worried? Activision's game was far better than *Ramparts* anyway. What's *really* annoying to everyone is when a clone game is better than the original.

Flares

Having just defected to the best computer mag I wish to answer Mr Scott Trenchard's letter in November CU in which he said he hated compilations. I think compilations are trendy 'cos I only just got a 64 and if it weren't for compilations I would have had to go back to the Sovient Union to get away from the bank and the bailiffs because I couldn't afford all the mega-fantastic brill games given CU Screen Stars in the past while I was using the XZ81. Keep up the good work at trendy CU (do you wear trendy flares?)
Russell Vanley

Nobody wears flares at CU, not even Nick Kelly whose girlfriend keeps trying to convince him they're cool. Who'd take us seriously if we did?

Elephantine

Did you know that the gestation period of an elephant is 2 years? And that one elephant year is approximately 8 human years.

Therefore it must be assumed that when a baby elephant is born it is already old enough to drink, drive, shave, smoke, read The Times, and its voice is broken.
Freddie Krueger
Ballincullig, Eire

P.S. It is also old enough to read ZZAP! but doesn't buy it because it's too expensive.
P.P.S. In another two years it will be old enough to buy "Jack the Ripperwear trendy flares."

Two years after that and it'll be as old as Eugene Lacey (that's the same age as Linda Lusardi, funnily enough).

Poster

I've spotted all of you. There you are, behind the *Afterburner* console. I suppose that's the winner of the OURNUT compo inside the game. He's bored to death because you could only find 99p between you to play the game with. Oh well, not to worry, have a game or two of "Mutie Madness" in which "a mutie gets his head blown off. Oh, then you could have sex and go crazy as well. As you may have guessed, I just thought your poster was amazing! Thanks and praise to Jamie Hewlett and Philip Bond. Good work!

I want to know who the bloke with antenna is!

Okay, keep up the great mag and Mike, don't be too much of a megalomaniac. Oh, and can I have the pattern for those wonderful socks Mrs Kelly?

Thanks for the great read.

Tom Blakeson

You are correct. There we are ignoring Eugene Lacey. MP's getting the cold shoulder from a girlie with pink hair, Nick Kelly is sporting a pair of popstar shades and Elaine Bishop is modelling a CU t-shirt. The guy with the antennae must be our beady-eyed publisher Terry. Jamie is currently writing GAS for us, so expect more weirdos!

Calendar prediction

Basically being an unoriginal sod I decided to rip off another of poor old Pattenden's ideas. So here it is, the Software Calendar

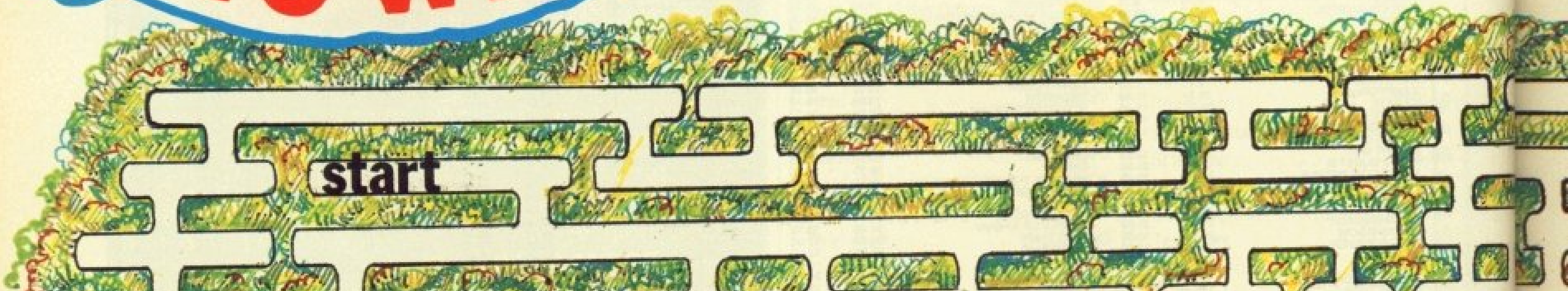
for 1990.
January
ZZap 500 ceases publication after its exorbitantly priced (thirty quid to you guv') 'Christmas Special' sells three copies.
February
Commodore User changes its name to 'Datel Monthly' after the entire magazine is taken over by adverts for Eprom Burners. Rainbird release 'Soft Pawn' in its new holographic, ultra glossy, bullet proof, koala flavoured packaging only to find they haven't yet written the game. A Rainbird spokesperson said 'We were so pleased with the packaging we forgot about the game bit . . .'
March
Ocean announce a TV tie-in based on the Test Card. The last Spectrum owner is tracked down to a Sinclair Distribution warehouse in the Antarctic but roars off at 3 m.p.h. on a C5.
April
Datel Monthly is sued by the Viewers and Listeners association after Tommy's Tips is mangled by the typesetters and emerges as Tommy's Tits. Andy Braybrook is beheaded by a mob of 14 year olds after his twenty thousand line program (published by Datel Monthly) 'Infinite Everything on absolutely everything' turns out to be an April Fool joke.
May
Finding itself with a circulation of zero Crash consults Popular Computing Weekly on how to cope. Eugene Lacey is found playing Sam Fox Strip Poker under the blankets and is instantly sacked (again).
June
The Games Machine goes back to being a bi-monthly but no-one notices. Computer and Video Games wins the BPI award for best music magazine.
July
Crash does just that and a mysterious blaze sweeps through all the Star Trek development disks. A Firebird spokesperson said she is ''deeply relieved'. Mark Cale gets to drive his Ferrari for the first time in five years.
August
Mark Cale wraps his Ferrari around a mounted policeman. Gary Penn's hair collapses and kills nine people at a dinner for Well a dinner for Software Houses anyway. Ocean release *TV Test Card* to rave reviews from dead people.
September
The balcony at the PCW show finally collapses, landing on the business computing section, which is of course, completely empty.
October
CRL achieve the ambition of a lifetime and have their latest graphic adventure *Skip The Puppy Gets Minced* completely banned, thereby ensuring massive sales in the US and Australia.
November
Firebird release *Stir Trock* and Parkhurst release Mike Pattenden after charges of 'excessive cruelty to dogs' are dropped. Mark Cale is given a sparkler on the fifth and incinerates Yorkshire. Graftgold sue Firebird who are currently counter-sueing Hewson who are considering taking legal proceedings against Elite who are currently sueing Gremlin. Ocean bring out a game on copyright and are sued. US Gold sue themselves accidentally.
December
Datel Monthly goes bust after a Micro Live Report reveals that things like disk notchers, kernal boards and com-drum duplikator editor deep scanning burst nibblers do not in fact exist but were made up by Datel's silly names department. Computer and Video Games wins the Holywood Video award for best Film Magazine.
P.S. The *Hunters Moon* review page looked bloody good, congrats to whoever did it, now THAT'S the way.
Simon Kavanagh
London E9

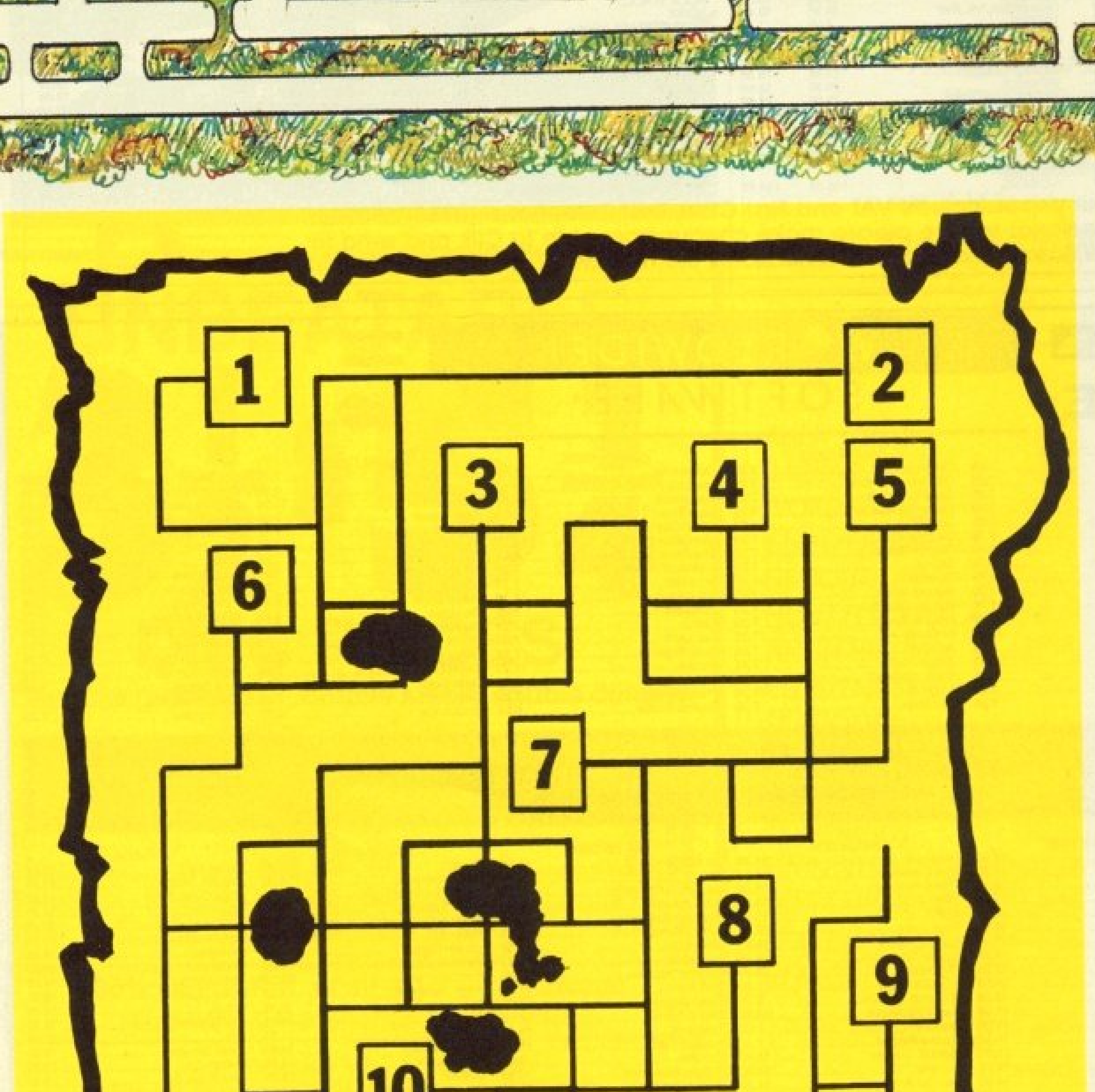
The Bishop thanks you for your praise. You show great foresight grasshopper. Just remember though that in the Land of Dogs the one-legged man has a hard life.



PLAY TO WIN

PLA





By GARY PEN

The Jungle

Use this map to find your way through the jungle to the bridge — not forgetting to pick up the explosives (marked 'E') on the way. Should you decide to leave the explosives you'll get roasted by a flame-thrower-wielding guerilla when you try to cross the bridge.

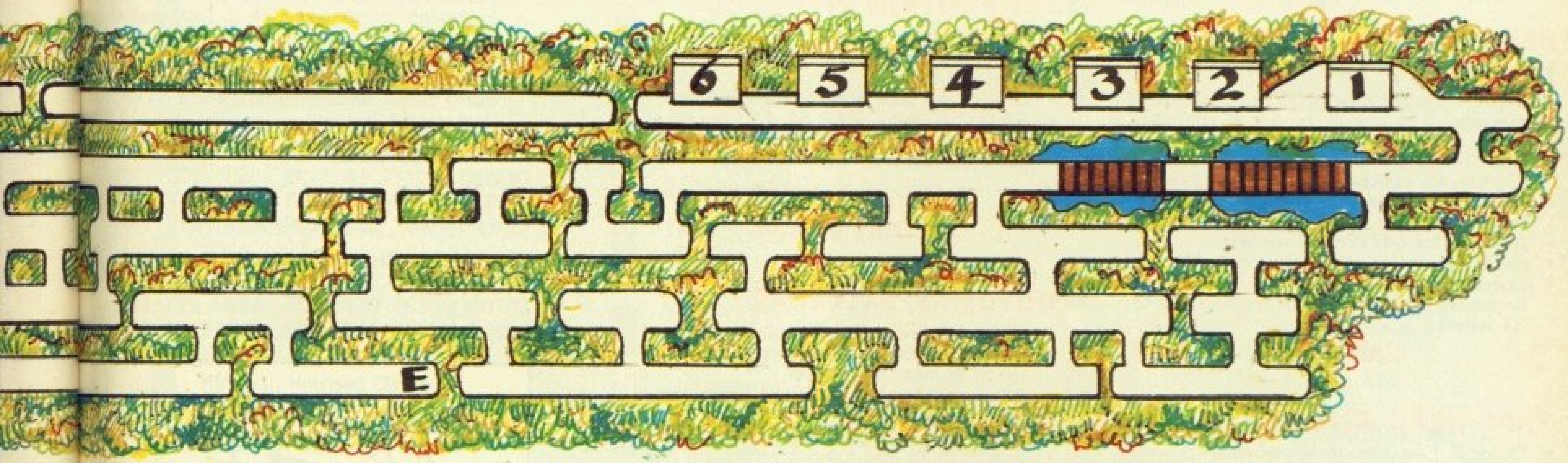
A well-placed grenade disposes of any snipers, but it's best to jump the bullet and/or the sniper.

Shoot the guerillas as they appear on screen. Don't let them get anywhere near you.

The Village

Ignore the first three huts, but get the map from the fourth — watch out for the guerilla inside. Shoot the sonofabitch. Go to the far left (sixth) hut and get the torch which is to the right of the pot of rice next to the booby-trapped sack. Now go to the

ATOON



PENN

Two highly helpful maps plus tips for all six sections . . . what more could you ask for? OK, pokes would be useful. Maybe next month, eh?

trapdoor in the fifth hut (the one to the right) and stand on it to enter the next section.

The Tunnel Network

You may find it considerably easier to refer to this map rather than use the portion shown next to the playing area. The essential rooms you need to visit are: 1, 4, 10, and then 9 to escape. Room 1 contains some flares (along with an armed guerilla — so let 'im



have it), room 4 houses the compass, while a second lot of flares can be found in room 10 (*put them on? Ed*), and the clear exit is in 9. Don't hang around in the same spot for too long — otherwise a knife-wielding soldier will appear.



The Bunker

There's not a lot to say other than the tips in the manual are helpful enough.

The Jungle

The best route seems to be go left, right, left, right, left, right, left, right, right, left, right, left, right, and left. The most useful tip to bear in mind is that you can usually run 'into' the screen before the guerillas get a chance to appear — in fact you need to if you're going to get out in time. Keep firing — you'll run out of time before you run out of bullets.

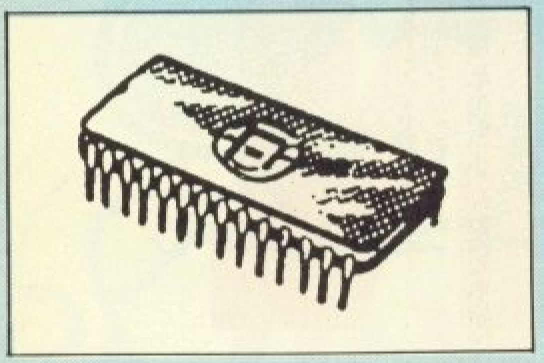
The Final Section

Keep moving. Barnes homes in on your position. Move in close and when you find a spot where the grenades hit home (don't forget to collect the box before you attempt to do anything else), simply move left and right to avoid the spray of bullets and keep lobbing. If you're cool enough you'll get to see the congratulatory picture (above right) and message . . .





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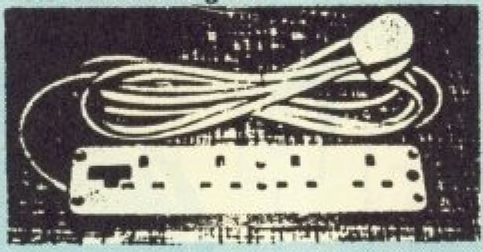
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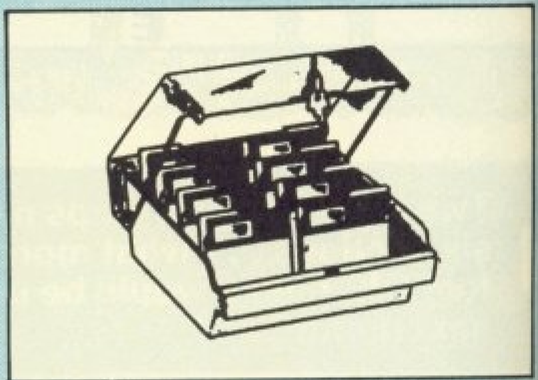
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CU1

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PSYCHO SOLDIER
(Imagine)

Type in this short listing, RUN it, then follow the on-screen prompts to LOAD the game with infinite lives.

```
1 REM PSYCHO SOLDIER CHEAT (C) HM PUGH 1988
2 FOR X=541 TO 578: READ Y:C=C+Y:POKE X,Y:NEXT
3 IF C=3726 THEN POKE 157,128:SYS 541
4 PRINT "DATA ERROR"
5 DATA 32, 86, 245, 72, 169, 32, 141, 84, 3, 169, 2, 141, 86
6 DATA 3, 141, 52, 10, 169, 59, 141, 51, 10, 104, 238, 32, 208
7 DATA 96, 72, 77, 80, 169, 141, 8, 232, 76, 0, 130
```

HM Pugh, Holywell, Clywd

HUNTER'S MOON
(Thalamus)

Type in and RUN this program to load the game with infinite lives.

```
0 REM ** BY D SLACK **
1 FOR A = 544 TO 591
2 READ B:POKEA, B:C=C+B:NEXT
3 IF C=5824 THEN SYS544
4 PRINT "DATA ERROR":END
5 DATA 32, 44, 247, 169, 21, 141, 177, 3
6 DATA 169, 55, 141, 178, 3, 169, 106, 141
7 DATA 179, 3, 32, 108, 245, 169, 67, 141
8 DATA 39, 192, 169, 2, 141, 44, 192, 32
9 DATA 191, 3, 96, 169, 244, 141, 154, 35
10 DATA 169, 0, 141, 242, 193, 76, 226, 193
```

NB: When the game loads there will be no more music and the border will flash.

RASTAN
(Ocean)

Type in and RUN this listing to give you infinite lives and infinite energy, but you still have to keep away from the water and lava.

```
0 REM ** BY D SLACK **
1 FOR X=400 TO 457
2 READ B:POKEX, B:C=C+B: NEXT
3 IF C=6543 THEN SYS400
4 PRINT "DATA ERROR":END
5 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245, 169, 163
6 DATA 141, 196, 2, 169, 1, 141, 201, 2
7 DATA 76, 167, 2, 169, 189, 141, 116, 1
8 DATA 169, 1, 141, 117, 1, 169, 88, 141
9 DATA 211, 2, 169, 96, 141, 244, 10, 141
10 DATA 125, 10, 76, 81, 3, 169, 96, 141
11 DATA 165, 160, 169, 173, 141, 7, 201, 76
12 DATA 26, 129
```

NB: When the game loads there will be no music.

D. Slack, Maidstone, Kent

DEFLEKTOR
(Gremlin Graphics)

Type in this listing, RUN it, then do as you're told on-screen to load the game with infinite energy and no overloads.

```
1 REM DEFLEKTOR CHEAT (C) HM PUGH 1988
2 FOR X=320 TO 347:READ Y:C=C+Y:POKE X,Y:NEXT
3 IF C=3008 THEN POKE 157, 128;SYS 320
4 PRINT "DATA ERROR"
5 DATA 32, 86, 245, 169, 81, 141, 204, 2, 169, 1, 141, 205, 2, 96
6 DATA 72, 77, 80, 169, 165, 141, 143, 54, 141, 249, 54, 76, 5, 8
```

GAUNTLET II
(US Gold)

Type in this listing, RUN it, then follow the on-screen prompts to load the game with infinite energy.

```
10 SYS 65371:POKE 53280,0:POKE 53281,0:POKE 646,1
20 PRINT "BY ANDY GRIFO"
30 FOR A=8448 TO 8512:POKE A,255:NEXT
40 POKE 53248,100:POKE 53249,100:POKE 53276,1
50 FOR A=528 TO 591:READ B:POKE A,B:NEXT
60 SYS 528
70 DATA 32,44,247,32,108,245,169,27,141
80 DATA 208,8,169,58,141,209,8,76,16,8
90 DATA 169,32,141,48,43,169,53,141,49
100 DATA 43,169,2,141,50,43,76,3,42,238
110 DATA 38,208,169,155,141,17,208,169
120 DATA 1,141,21,208,169,132,141,248,7
130 DATA 238,1,208,169,96,141,231,154,96
```

NB: Your energy will appear to go down. This is normal.

Andy Grifo, Walkden, Worsley

BANGKOK KNIGHTS
(System 3)

Infinite energy is yours if you type in the following listing, RUN it, then follow the on-screen prompts . . .

```
10 SYS 65371:POKE 646,1
20 PRINT "BY ANDY GRIFO"
30 FOR A=608 TO 624: READ B:POKE A, B:NEXT
40 FOR A=53213 TO 53256: READ B:POKE A, B:NEXT
50 SYS 608
60 DATA 32,44,247,32,108,245,169,128
70 DATA 141,237,2,76,166,2,76,221,207
80 DATA 169,32,141,249,3,169,246,141,250
90 DATA 3,169,207,141,251,3,169,96,141
100 DATA 252, 3, 169, 127, 76, 81, 3, 169, 32, 141, 249
110 DATA 75,169,0,141,250,75,169,234,141
120 DATA 170,17,141,171,17,96
```

Andy Grifo, Walkden, Worsley

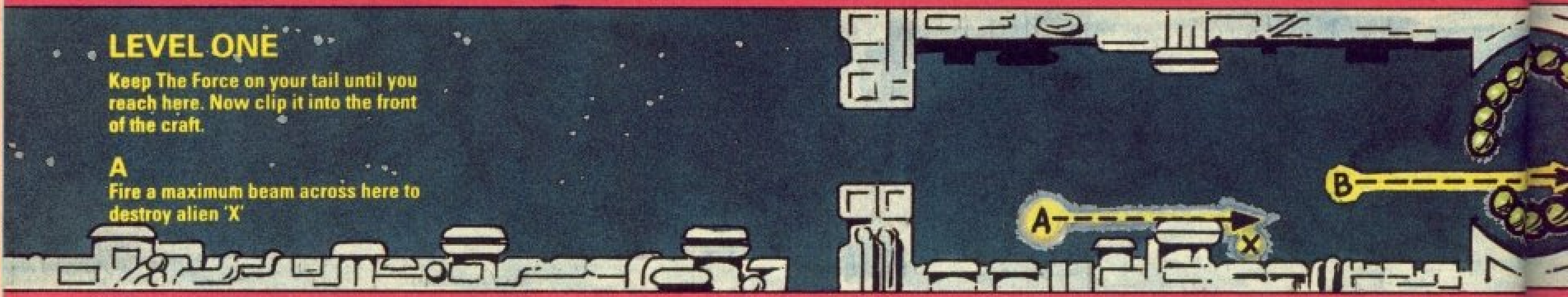
SUPER SPRINT
(Electric Dreams)

Fingers at the ready . . . type in this listing (not forgetting to save it for future use) . . .

```
0 REM SUPER SPRINT CHEAT (C) HM PUGH '88
1 FOR X=65440 TO 65471:READ Y:C=C+Y:POKE X,Y:NEXT
2 FOR X=49381 TO 49399:READ Y:C=C+Y:POKE X,Y:NEXT
3 IF C <>6800 THEN PRINT "DATA ERROR":END
4 INPUT "DO YOU WANT TO STOP THE DRONE FROM WINNING (Y/N)";A$
5 IF A$="Y" THEN POKE 65452,0
6 INPUT "DO YOU WANT TO STOP THE RED CAR FROM WINNING (Y/N)";B$
7 IF B$="Y" THEN POKE 6547,0
8 INPUT "DO YOU WANT TO STOP THE BLUE CAR FROM WINNING (Y/N)";C$
9 IF C$="Y" THEN POKE 65462,0
10 POKE 157,128:SYS 49381
11 DATA 169, 130, 141, 161, 152, 141, 166, 152, 141, 171, 152, 169, 199
12 DATA 141, 68, 153, 169, 237, 141, 62, 153, 169, 180, 141, 56
13 DATA 153, 76, 235, 2, 72, 77, 80, 169, 192, 141, 41, 3, 32
14 DATA 86, 245, 169, 128, 141, 206, 1, 169, 233, 141, 207, 1, 96
```

Now type RUN (RETURN) and follow the on-screen prompts, answering the questions with eith Y or N for Yes or N. *Super Sprint* should then LOAD and RUN with the selected changes.

NB:
If you disable a car from winning they won't win when they finish their 3rd lap or any other lap thereafter.
For a 1 Player game it's best to answer the question Y, Y, N.
For a 2 Player game it's best to answer the questions Y, N, N.



LEVEL ONE

Keep The Force on your tail until you reach here. Now clip it into the front of the craft.

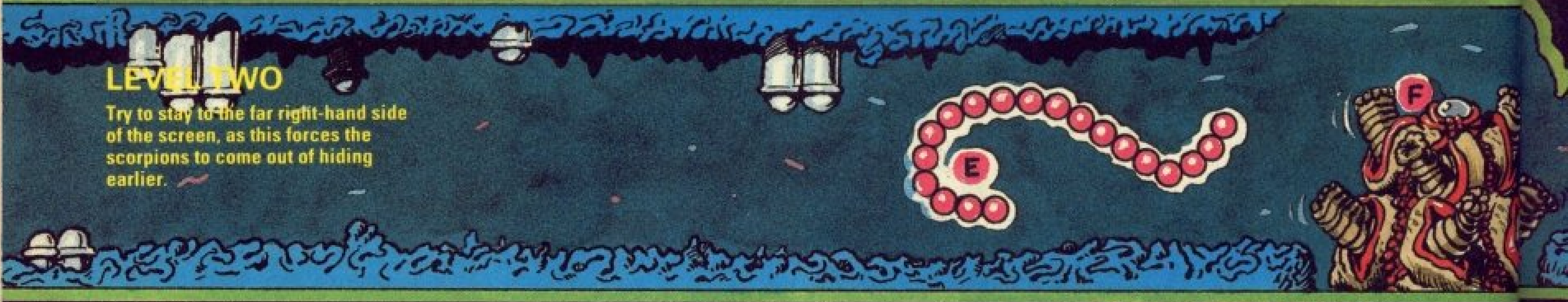
A
Fire a maximum beam across here to destroy alien 'X'

B
Keep the 'beam up' button depressed until the blue orb is in line thus… Now let 'er rip. If your aim is good, the chain will be destroyed.

C
Here's a pose to impress the ignorant… When you reach this point, stay to the far left hand side of the screen. Keep firing as you progress, but don't bother looking at the screen — as long as you accumulated all the extra weapons along the way, you should be able to sail through to the alien at the end of the level without a problem. It looks cool, too!

D
Sit yourself just below the centre of the screen and beam up. when the large alien's tail flicks down and a head appears in its stomach, let rip — but avoid the stream of death it issues forth. One more shot like this and the alien will die.

Alternatively, shoot The Force into the alien's belly, just where the head appears, and keep firing. the alien should blow up shortly after the head appears.



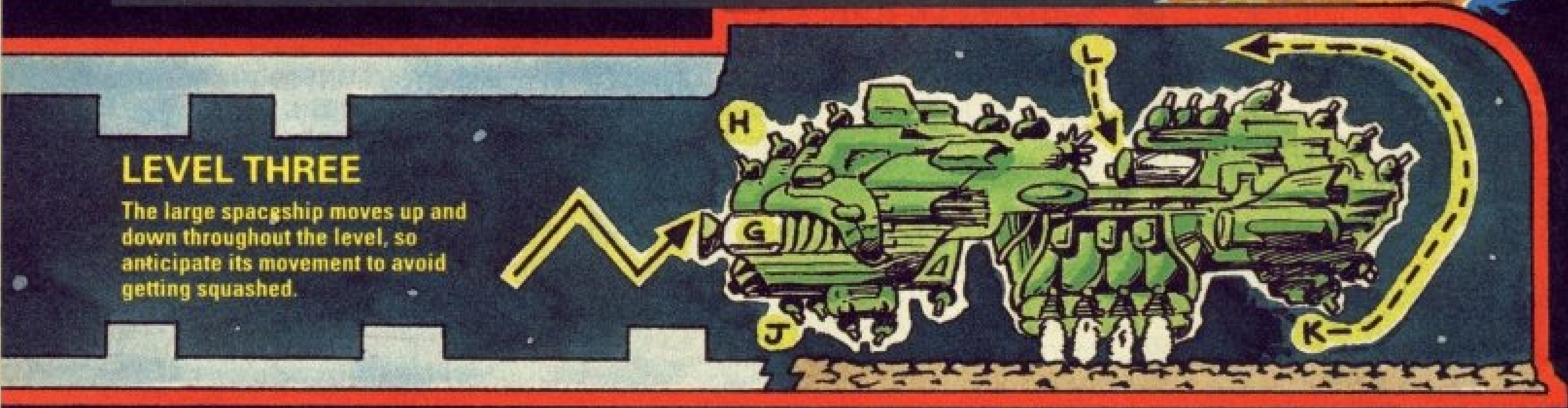
LEVEL TWO

Try to stay to the far right-hand side of the screen, as this forces the scorpions to come out of hiding earlier.

E
Stay here and shoot the snake-like creature as it spins around you.

F
There are two ways you can dispose of this gruesome object. The first approach is fastest but results in the loss of a 20,000 point bonus. Simply sit here, then unleash a maximum beam at the blue orb when it appears. The creature should blow up.

Or, sit here with The Force bearly touching the 'lips' and thus the blue orb when it appears. Keep firing and eventually the creature dies and an extra 20,000 points are yours.



LEVEL THREE

The large spaceship moves up and down throughout the level, so anticipate its movement to avoid getting squashed.

G
Shoot The Force in here when the thruster stops thrusting (Erk! Fnarr! Fnarr!)

H
Erradicate these gun emplacements first, then move down to…

J
Shoot The Force under here, then move to H and keep firing. As The Force is drawn slowly back to your ship (DON'T use the call/eject Force button — button B) it destroys most of the gun emplacements. When the opportunity arises, go get The Force and rub it against the 'spiky' gun emplacement. 'Beam up' to destroy the thrusters, then when you reach…

K
…slip The Force onto your rear(!) and follow the dotted line, destroying the guns as you go (keep moving to avoid the deadly flames).

L
Destroy all aliens and gun emplacements before putting The Force on the front of your ship and going down to finish the enemy ship



LEVEL FOUR

'Beam up' to destroy as many green dots as possible (and hopefully the aliens with it).

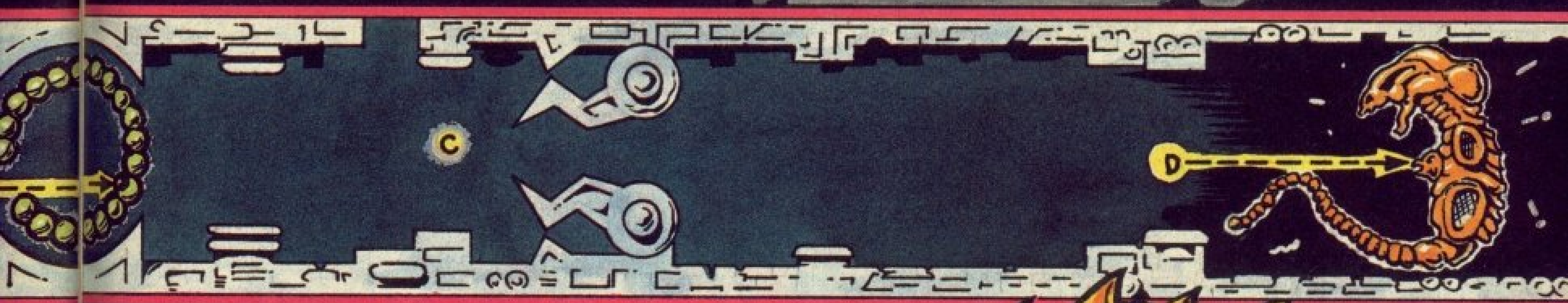
If your bullets can pass through any gaps you've created, so can your ship — even if it doesn't look like it.

M
Put The Force onto the back of the ship when you reach this point.

N
Enter the mass of green dots roughly here. Keep firing, and keep to the far left of the screen. When you exit the dots, move up to…

P
…and shoot The Force into the fray(!). Hooray. When the screen is about to stop scrolling, clear any remaining dots then move to…

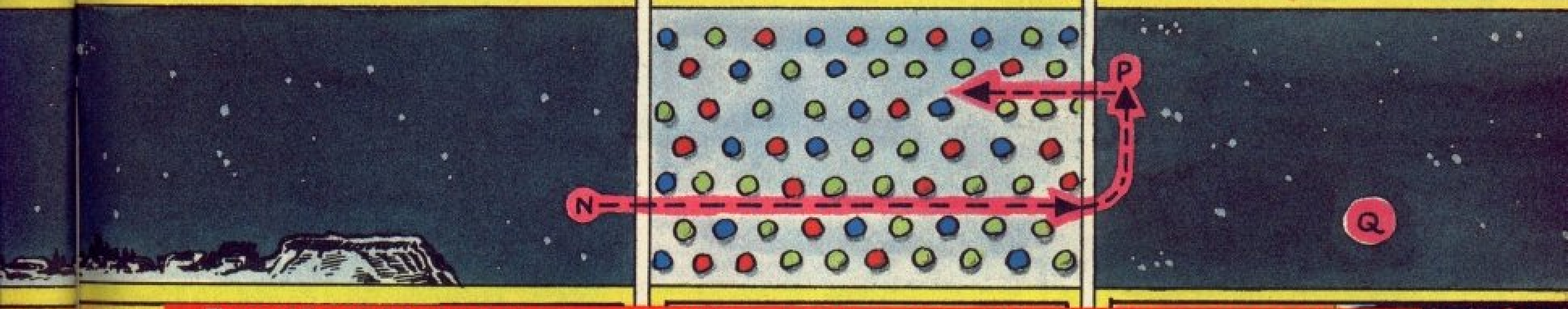
Q
Shoot like crazy and follow the craft across the screen. You should destroy the lower third of the craft by the time you reach the far right hand side. Now follow the craft up the screen, shooting the green orb of the left hand half as you go. The third portion has to be hit directly on the centre of its green orb to destroy it.





for good. Wait until the purple device slides back, then rest the Force on top of it and shoot the eye with a full beam when it appears. Incidentally, you can pass through the ship when it flashes.

R-TYPE



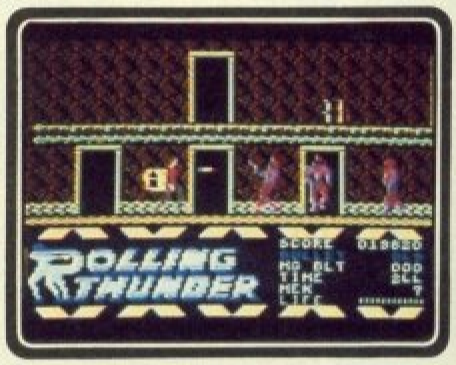
They said it couldn't be done (although no-one's entirely sure who *they* are). But we've gone and done it anyway. Yes, for the second month running Commodore User is proud to present more ace arcade tips. This month it's *R-Type's* turn.

***R-Type* is undoubtedly one of the most impressive but difficult shoot 'em ups ever to appear in the arcades. These gear tips won't immediately make you an *R-Type* poseur, but they should help you conquer some of its more awkward areas. At least that's the theory…**

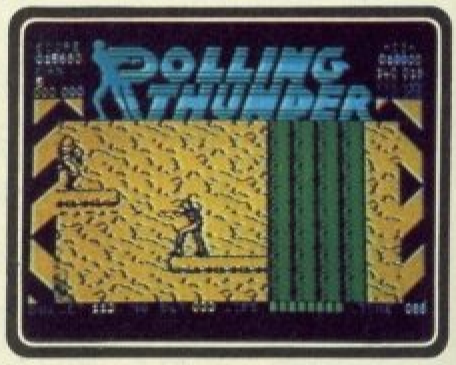
Ta v. muchly to John Twiddy and Phil Churchyard for their advice, and a smaller but by no means worthless sign of appreciation to Mark Cale for allowing us to use his *R-Type* machine and generally disrupt System 3's workflow.

ROLLING THUNDER™

namco



Screen shot from CBM version.



Screen shot from Spectrum version.



Screen shot from Amstrad version.



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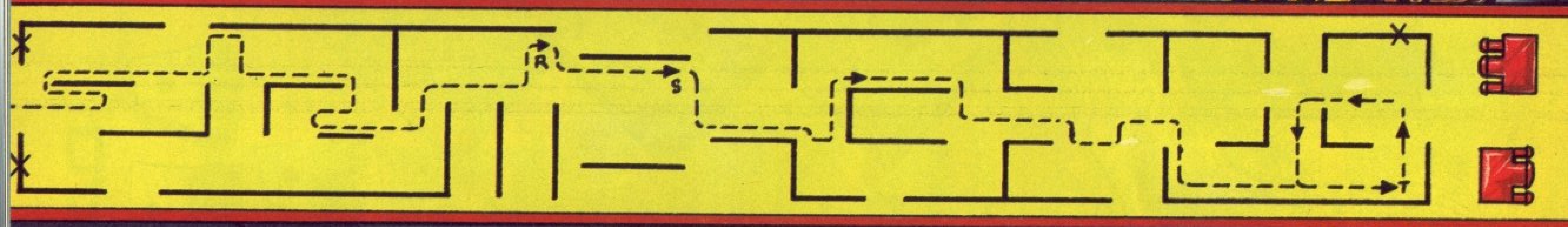
U.S. GOLD

U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX. Tel: 021 356 3388

LEVEL FIVE

No map, I'm afraid, as the scenery has no distinguishing landmarks. However, it must be noted that this is the only level where you can collide with the scenery without dying.
Beam up as often as possible — as soon as you've let off a full beam, beam up again.
Don't shoot the snakes unless you can hit the heads.
Try to stay on the 'inside' of the snakes, as the pieces fly outwards when they die.
Shoot the snakes' heads when they're at the bottom of the screen as the pieces don't fly around the screen when it dies.
Try to get a highly damaging full beam shot in as the alien at the end of the level appears. When it starts following you around the screen, shoot bits off the top and bottom to give you more time. Only use full beam shots.





LEVEL SIX

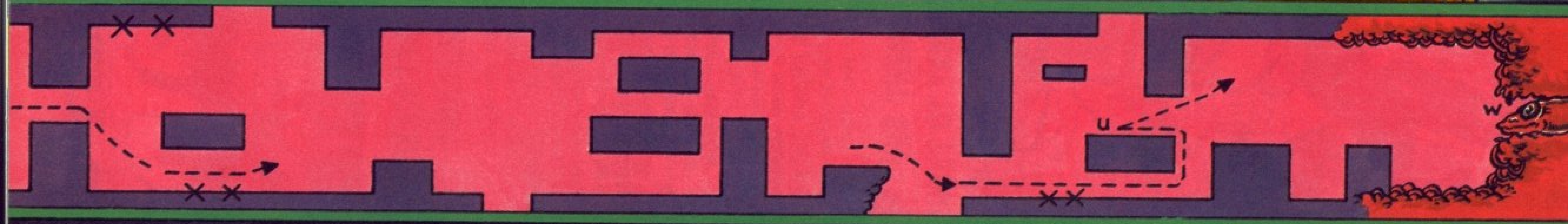
This is where the going gets even tougher. There's a fairly straightforward route through to the end, so follow it. You have to learn the movement patterns of the aliens the hard way...

Shoot the lower alien ('X') first so you have enough time to shoot the weapon-bearing pod creature thing AND the other alien above. Now make your way to...

R
Wait here and shoot the aliens as they drop down. Now move to...

S
...and shoot the next wave of aliens as they drop down (you can just about touch the platform — which helps, as it means you don't get hit by the bullets they release). Follow the route through to the end sequence and sit at...

T
Oh yes, shoot the alien ('X') at the top of the screen before sitting here... Right, with the Force on your tail shoot the aliens as they move down the screen. Ah but, you can't kill the aliens unless you shoot their flashing blobby bits (OO-er! fnarr! fnarr!), which means you have to avoid the first alien that comes down facing left, so to speak. Got that? No? Right. This little devil is facing right. Shoot it.
This little devil is facing left. Yoiks! Get out of its way, via the route indicated.



LEVEL SEVEN

Oh dear, this is another nasty level. Keep plenty of ten pees handy, 'cause we're going in for the kill...

Watch out for the exploding scenery (some of which is indicated on t'map with an 'X'). Bravely battle your way through to...

U
Wait at and shoot from the far left hand side of the screen as the waves of aliens attack. Kill 'em. When the red aliens appear on the far right, move it! Now watch the whole game slow down something rotten. But watch out! When the alien count decreases, everything speeds up again very quickly.
Make your way to the end sequence — the alien scrap yard. Watch out for the falling debris.

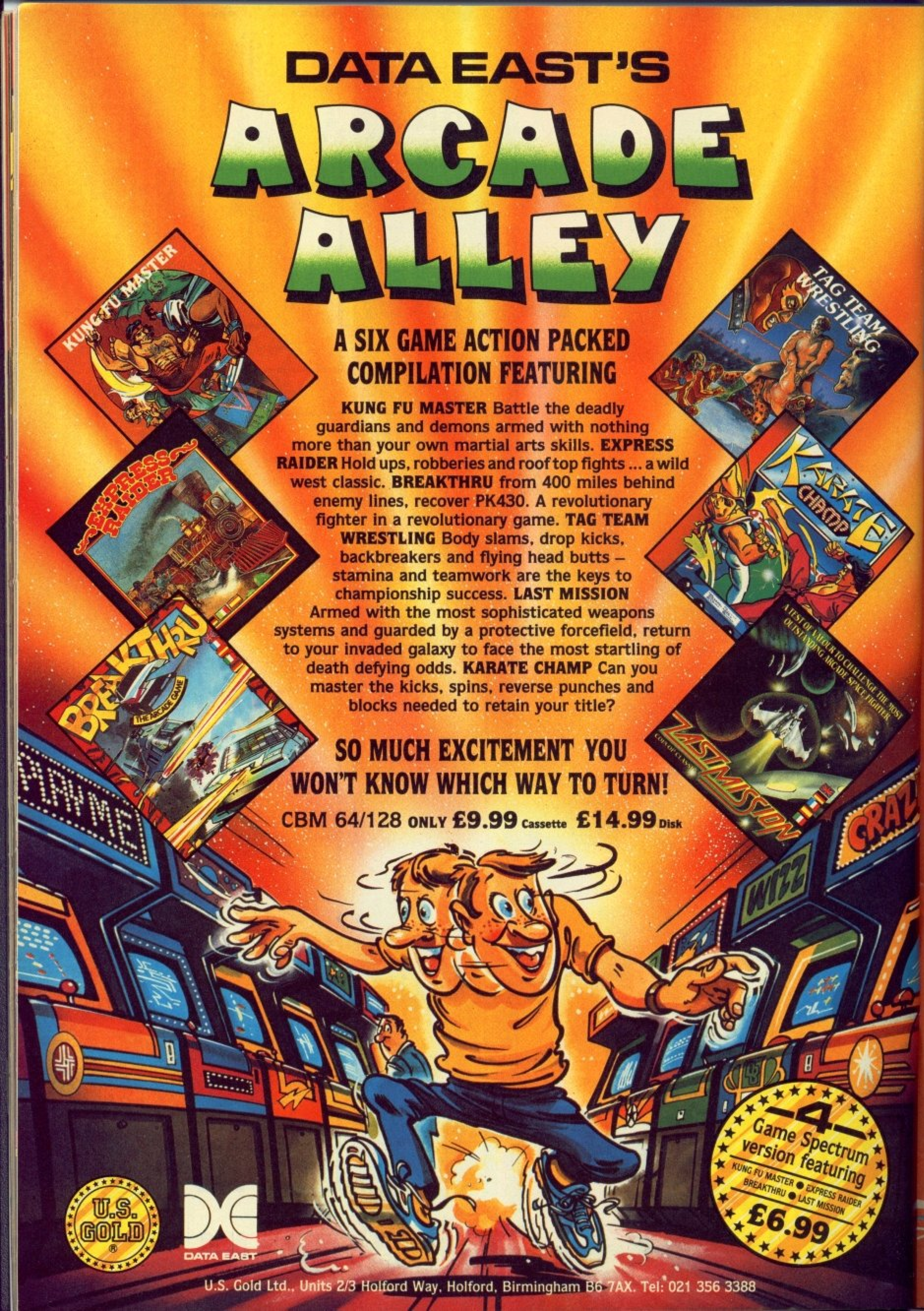
W
Stay as close as possible to the alien's glowing orb (Fnoor! Fnoor!) and when it appears shoot it. Make sure you shoot the shi... shinola out of the orb each time the alien appears, 'cause if he isn't dead on his third appearance — panic!

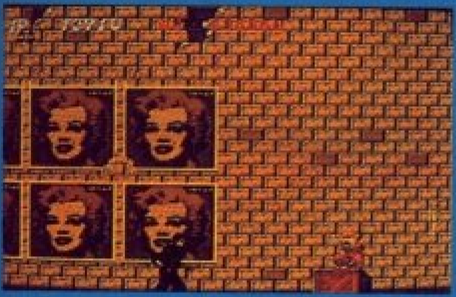
LEVEL EIGHT

'Ere we go... the last level. Arguably easier than the previous two levels — but not much. There's no map either, as it all looks the same.

The key to conquering this level is... keep moving, although it's wiser to stick to the left hand side of the screen. Collect all the extra weapons you can (unless you're such a cocky sod that you've managed to get this far without losing a life), and when you reach the end sequence, stay in the centre of the screen and shoot like crazy. When the 'shield' in front of the large alien opens up, let 'im have it in the gob — a full beam and The Force. The Force should now be firmly lodged in his mouth, and you're probably dead 'cause I forgot to tell you about the stream of death he throws at you once you've shot him. Keep firing and watch out for the babies!

With a little skill, luck, what have you, you should destroy the fat git and complete the level and thus the game! Cut to twee ending, rapturous applause, etc. Ah, but the battle has only just begun (or something equally cliched)! For *R-Type* the second time around is a damn sight harder than before, and let me tell you... I can't help you.


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A Ninja warrior gets the jump on Joe.



Eyes off Marilyn — there's a hostage to be rescued.

SEGA (2 × 10p)

SHINOBI

On first appearences, Sega's latest upright, *Shinobi*, bears a striking resemblance to Arari's *Rolling Thunder*, that popular, but to these eyes rather dreary, horizontally-scrolling secret agent shoot 'em up. You remember — your cool clean on-screen hero wanders along a two-floor landscape, jumping up onto balconies and back down onto floors while zapping a collection of mysterious nasties, most of whom look like psychotic bee-keepers in their bizarre hood/helmet thingies.

In *Shinobi* you're a lone Ninjutsu master by name of Joe Musashi, with a mission to rescue kidnapped Ninja children (these unfortunates are dotted about the playing area, bound and clad in distinctive pink polyester jump-suits) and destroy their terrorist kidnappers. Initially, the action takes place on two floors, ground and terrace. You've got three controls: a fire button which makes you throw shurikens, fire machine pistols or kick and punch, depending on what level you're on, what weapons you've acquired and how far away the person you're attempting to dis is; a jump button, which enables you to leap up and down, essential both for movement and for avoiding missiles; and finally a smart-bomb "Ninja Magic" button — you only get one per life, but when you press it Joe folds his arms, shrieks something which sounds like "Shuriakin" and alter ego sprites dart all over the screen, killing all the "ordinary" fighters in sight.

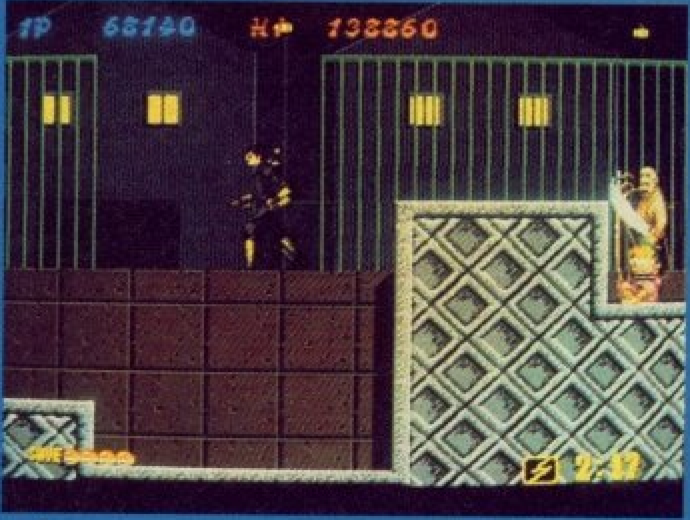
The "ordinary" fighters include dagger-wielders, gunmen, difficult-to-zap sword-throwers, spiderman types who jump off walls at you, helicopter-borne commandos and some particularly nasty now-you-see-'em-now-you-don't creatures.

But, tough though these baddies may be, they're positively cuddly compared to the Boss, an enormous Chinese warlord character. This charmer is about three times the size of everyone else in the game, yourself included, and fights by sending fireballs flying about the screen at you. He is first encountered at the end of each stage, when you've rescued your quota of hostages: he peeps his head around the edge of the screen and drops one of his hero-seeking fireballs before disappearing. You'll need to be reasonably nimble to avoid this and follow the "Go" sign on to the next stage.

But it's at the end of the level (there are several stages in each level) that you have the real showdown. It's just you and the Boss in one small room. He's got to be hit five times in the face, and no, your Ninja magic won't get rid of him, it'll just count as one on-target blow. Meanwhile, he's throwing his flaming missiles at you like there's no tomorrow. And if one makes contact, there isn't. It's no joke trying to jump up and fire accurately at face level (the Boss is too tall for you to hit in the head with your feet planted on the ground, natch) while evading the balls of fire snaking around this boudoir of death after you. But until he's dead, you can't go on.

When you eventually manage to defeat the big guy, there's a special bonus phase to compete in, and very nice it is too. The action becomes a kind of vertical shoot 'em up. You're represented by a pair of arms in the foreground, with a shuriken held in your right hand. Before you are two platforms, interspersed by chasms. Ninja warriors stream out along the furthermost platform from both sides of the screen, and you're got to try to hit them with the shurikens. But you'd better be quick about it: if not destroyed the Ninjas leap nimbly onto the nearer platform, and if one manages to make a second jump and reaches you, in true *Space Invaders* fashion, you're dead.

As the game progresses, the scenery changes and becomes far more intricate. There are heights to be scaled, wire fences to be leapt over and stairs to climb, all cluttered with increasingly tough enemies. And, as you've got to rescue all the hostages from a given stage before you can move on, each obstacle has to be confronted and overcome.



A swordfighter waits on the other side of the fence.

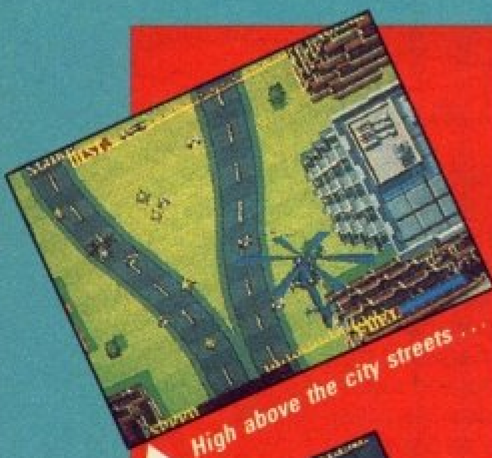
There are some nice graphic touches about, notably the blocks of Marilyn Monroe posters to be found on derelict walls, and the soundtrack is pleasant.

And, with five missions to complete, this one will keep you, and your money, occupied for quite some time. *Shinobi* doesn't break much new ground but nevertheless bears the hallmarks of a coin-up wow. It's tough, but not so tough that you lose interest. It combines several different kinds of shoot'em and beat'em up action in one well-thought-out, well-executed game. It looks good, it plays brilliantly and it's coming to an arcade near you soon.

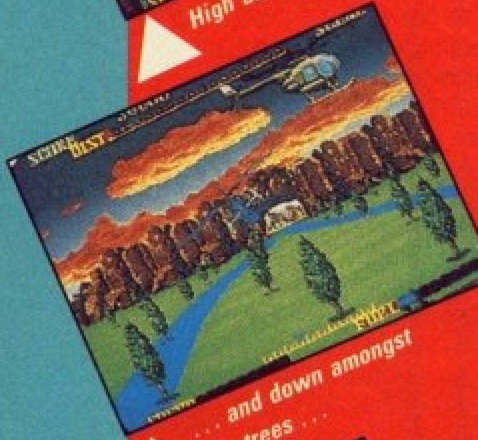
Nick Kelly.

GRAPHICS:	8
SOUND:	7
TOUGHNESS:	7
ENDURANCE:	8
VALUE:	8
OVERALL:	8

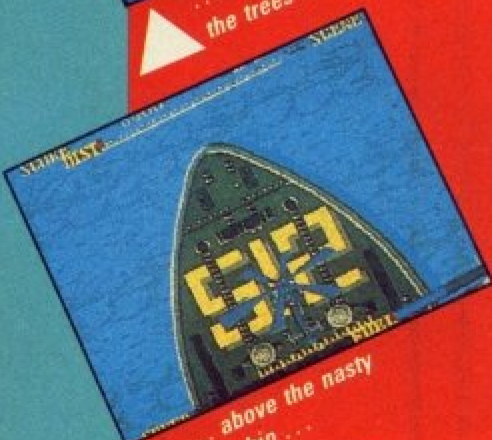
ARCA



High above the city streets . . .



. . . and down amongst the trees . . .



. . . above the nasty warship . . .



. . . hovering with ease (ouch! — Ed).



Tanks behind the towerblocks.

THUNDER BLADE

SEGA
(5 × 10p)

Well, nobody could accuse Sega of resting on their laurels. With *Afterburner* barely off the launch pad, and *Heavyweight Champ* just limbering up, the boffins could have been forgiven for taking a few weeks well-earned before embarking on yet another quest to push back the boundaries of state-of-the-art.

But no, not content with their monopolisation of the dedicated console market, Sega have just produced yet another exceptional coin-op. Is it a car? Is it a plane? No, it's a helicopter, and a pretty groovy one at that.

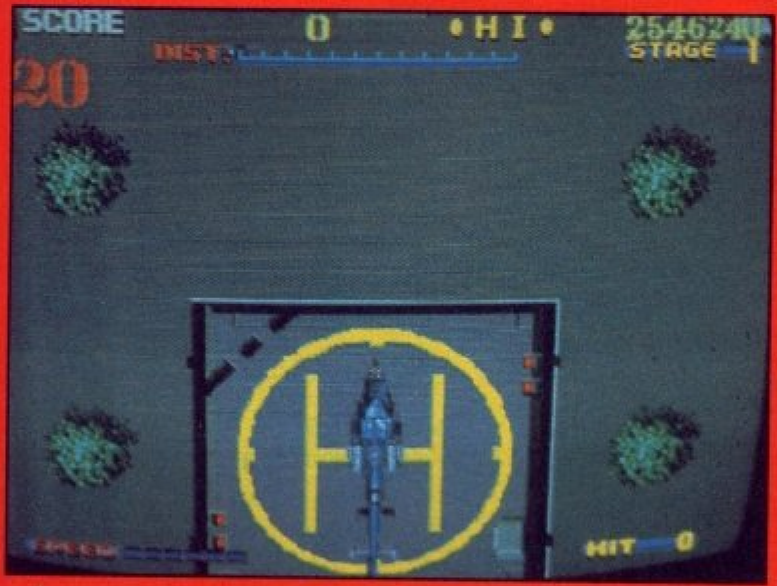
Thunder Blade puts you in the pilot seat of a fairly nifty fighter chopper. The controls handle just like the real thing, with a central joystick to govern height and left/right movement. Your two weapons' respective fire buttons are also housed in the stick's handle — a cannon and an air-to-ground missile cluster. Finally to your left there's a gear stick which allows you to choose between slow and fast speed flight. Slow effectively allows you to hover.

The seat is suspended by some slick hydraulics which cause you to shift about in response to joystick movement in much the same way as you might in the real thing. However, unless you are very gung-ho *and* put in years of training *and* manage to get invited to participate in a very violent war, you're very unlikely to be able to judge the realism or otherwise of the missions that *Thunder Blade* asks you to fly. You start out with a thirty second practice session during whichthe ground is seen from above. You've got to plaster all the emplacements, tanks and helicopters below before they can do it to you — and of course, you've also got to avoid crashing into the sides of the canyon which you're flying through.

Once this short phase is completed, the game proper begins. The screen view tilts from view-from-above to full frontal and you find yourself flying, *Afterburner*-style, through an airspace chock full of fighters, helicopters and

ARCA

ADES



Lifting off the launch pad.



Cremated by the cavern.



Arcade Star

missiles. The landscape begins as a high-rise building area, and you've got to guide your chopper in between the scrapers. The streets are overrun by tanks and armoured vehicles which also empty their magazines at you.

Being a helicopter, you can fly high above the ground or bring yourself right down to street level. You can hover — though if you do so for more than a few seconds, you're liable to be crept upon by a hostile aircraft and strafed — and you can even touch down on the tarmac.

The action is incredibly fast, though it's fair to say that one does feel a wee bit more in control than in *Afterburner*. You can fly over the tops of the 'scrapers, and hope that an enemy doesn't decide to pop up unexpectedly in your path, or you can take the lower-level route, cruising a few yards above the ground, taking out all the ironclads and avoiding the office buildings and trees that line the boulevards.

If you manage to negotiate this level, the screen briefly reverts to a verticle, as you take on an aircraft carrier bristling with anti-aircraft batteries.

The next level finds you crusing along, full-frontal mode once more, above the open fields. There are fighters here to take out, too, but with a bit of luck you should be able to reach the cavern entrance. Now your skills as a pilot are really in for a testing — you've got to bring your whirlybird through the stone portals and negotiate your way through a hair-raising subterannean obstacle course of stalagmites and stalactites, blasting away at lurking enemy craft all the while.

While you're attempting to make your way though these perilous locations the stereo speakers housed in your seat's headrest pump out music and excellent sound effects and, with the cockpit gently — and occasionally violently — swaying in response to your steering, you can almost smell the smoke of battle.

Sega can certainly pat themselves on the back — again. *Thunder Blade* really does bring the dedicated coin-op one more step up the ladder of brilliance. And what makes this game really special is that, while the action is fast and furious, it's not quite fast enough to turn it into a lucky dip shoot-'em-up (as some people have found *Afterburner* to be):

Thunder Blade is a toughie, make no mistake about it, but it's also a game where the better you get at handling the exceptionally realistic controls, the longer you can expect to live. If you're into sheer bone-shaking action-packed blasta-billy, you'll not be disappointed, but there's more to *Thunder Blade* than just thrills 'n' spills.

You may come for the action, but you'll stay for the challenge.

Nick Kelly.

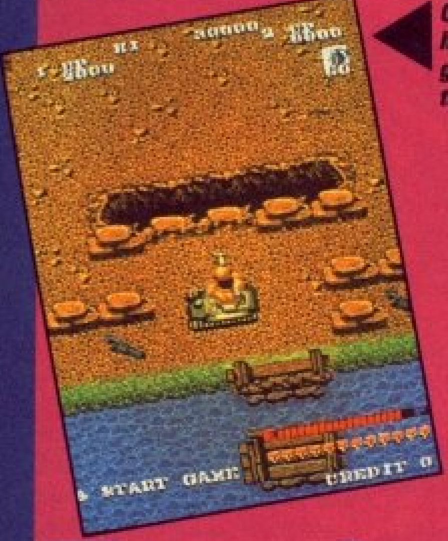
GRAPHICS:	9
SOUND:	9
TOUGHNESS:	8
ENDURANCE:	9
VALUE:	8
OVERALL:	9

ADES

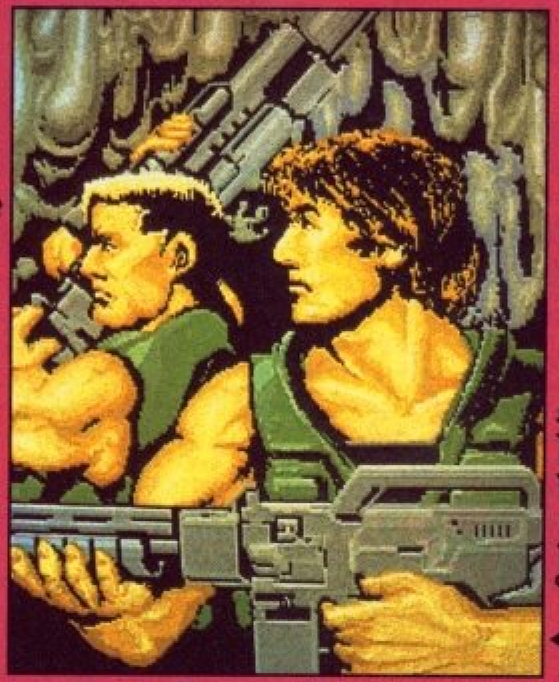


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...Can you access the next tower?...
...Could the final P.I.N. number be here?...
...Running into more trouble?...
...Why is the robot guarding that table?...
...A message on the tape recorder?...
...Quick! Escape from Elvin!!...
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EPYX®

PREVIEW



Guerrilla hijacks government tank.



Contras set out to "restore" "democracy".



A wander through Main Street, Nicaragua?

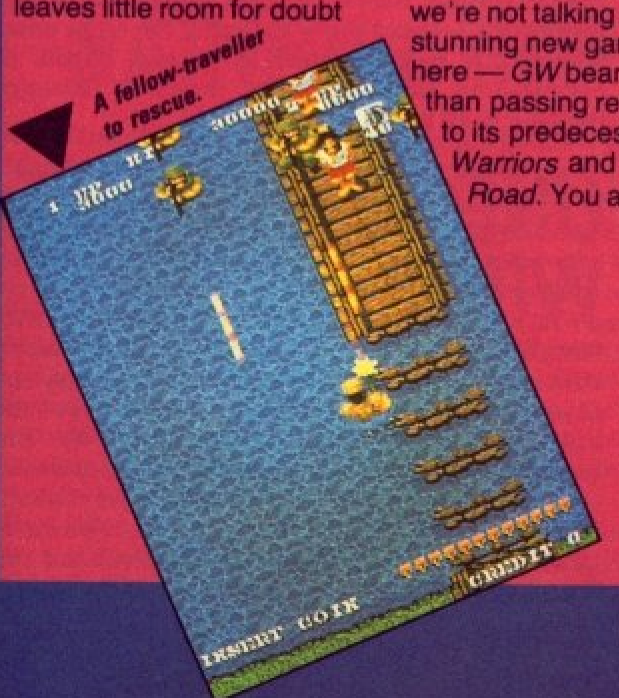
PREVIEW

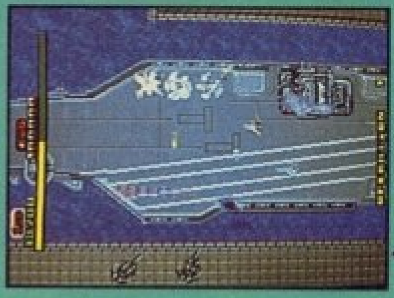
Freedom fighting in arcades

Somebody had to do it sooner or later, we suppose. Yes, those stalwart defenders of democracy Konami have just produced a coin-op which revels in the name of *Super Contra.* For one or two players, this is basically a fairly faithful update of their popular (and recently converted for the 64) hit, *Gryzor*. But instead of taking on nameless extra-terrestrials, *Super Contra* pits you against the Red menace, though, perhaps understandably, Konami have chosen not to actually name the country through which you and your sidekick roam, zapping Commies and blasting pinkos. Nevertheless, its handle leaves little room for doubt that the ungrateful wretches whom you're pledged to eliminate are some class of Sandinasties. "What is this place?" asks one of our intrepid onscreen heroes in the opening sequence. Why, it's a free country, buddy — surely you've seen one of *those* before.

But never fear, you reds, pinkos and members of the National Union of Journalists. This ideologically suspect shoot 'em up has a recently released rival. Long live "the heros *(sic)* of the revolution", proclaims SNK's *Guerilla Wars*, and while we're not too convinced about our comrades' spelling ability, we're sure their hearts are in the right places. Once again, we're not talking about a stunning new game concept here — *GW* bears a more than passing resemblance to its predecessors *Ikari Warriors* and *Victory Road*. You and your buddy blast your way past hordes of government troops, commanded by an evil colonel who can occasionally be spotted dancing about behind the lines, goading his men on and giving our two revolutionary friends very rude single finger signs. Well, you can stick it up your junta, mate, the workers are revolting. Or something.

A fellow-traveller to rescue.





Blast that carrier.

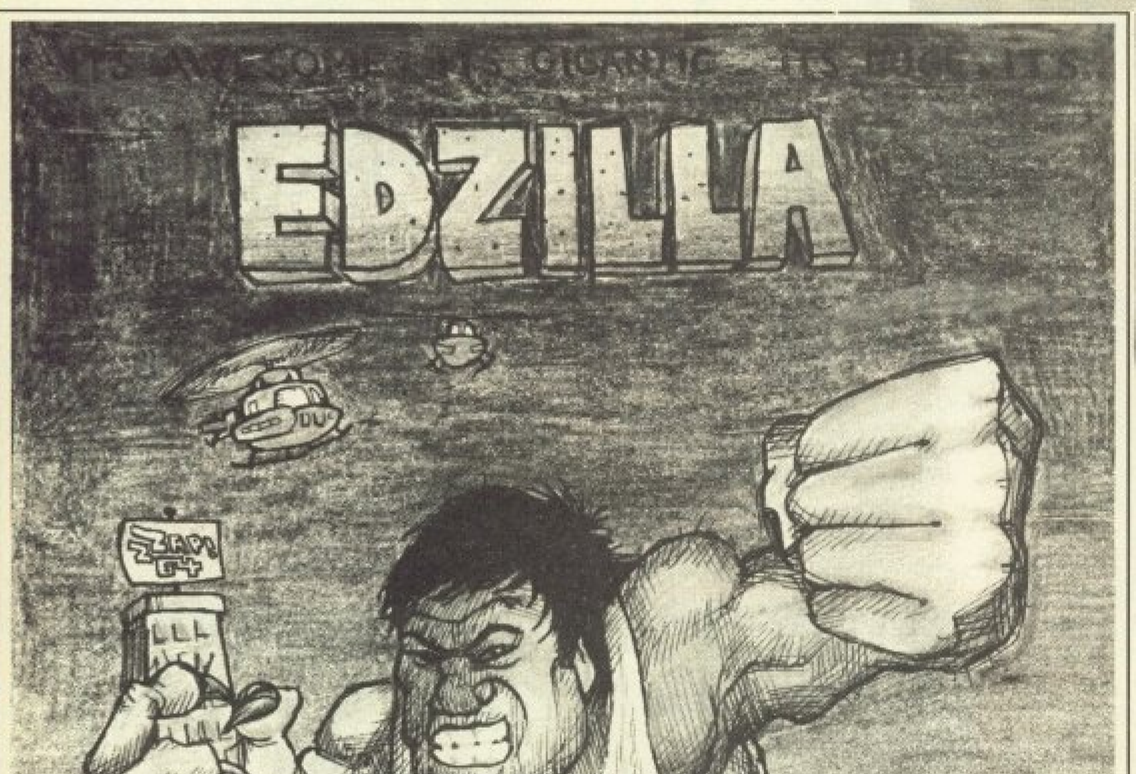


Sound that boom.

Sonic Sega

Another newie here from Sega has just caught our eyes. *Sonic Boom* owes much to the by now classic *1942* tradition, with your rather small, but sleek, jet encountering waves of enemy fighters, ground based ack-ack guns and tanks as you fly over the cityscape. There are extra companion fighters to be acquired (these increase your firepower) by shooting out a whole squadron of planes, and harmless munitions trains to blow up for bonus points. At the end of the level there's an enormous aircraft carrier to be taken out, which is no mean feat. You do have three smart bombs, which increase in destructiveness in proportion to the number of companion fighters you manage to have trailing along with you, and it's worth holding on to all three until you're faced with a big boy. *Sonic Boom* isn't likely to win many prizes for innovation, but it's a nice variation on an enduringly popular theme.

COMPO RESULTS





RAMPAGE COMP

If you wanted a chance to win a towering great Rampage coin-op you had to impress us with your sense of humour, good taste and drawing skills by depicting a monster of some kind destroying a building you hate. Hundreds of you sent us rampaging Maggie Thatchers, whilst there was even a piggin' great Robert Maxwell chewing up chunks of London. However it was between M. Whaite's hulking great Eugene O'Lacey ripping up Zzap Towers and Martin McKinney's Telecom tower horror for the mega prize. We couldn't help ourselves so Michael Whaite of Eccleston in Lancs come on down! A Rampage machine is all yours!

UNFORGETTABLE WINNERS

Well, about thirty-three trillion of you knew that U2 wailer Bono's real name is Paul Hewson, but only one of you — Clare Dendy of Basingstoke — gets to keep Eamon Dunphy's official U2 biography, "The Unforgettable Fire". Condolances, and a consolation copy of *Bonecruncher* to Patrick Cooper (Alton), Padraig Clarke (South Harrow), G.E. Thompson (Ruislip Manor), David Lindstrom (Sweden) and Tim Bradshaw (Ealing).

GREATEST CHRISTMAS GIVEAWAY EVER

In an extraordinary fit of festive generosity we assembled trillions of prizes under a Chrimbo tree and gave you all the chance to win one by giving us your New Year's resolution. Here's a huge list of the winners. We had thousands of entries so not everybody won something but a good proportion of you did.

Neil Carter, King's Lynn, Norfolk; (Excelerator Disk drive). Alan Hart, Blackhorse Rd, Walthamstow; (Thundercats vid). Steve Russell, Brideport, Dorset; (Thundercats vid). Richard Lund, Westgate, Morecombe; (Thundercats vid). W Moore, Redcar, Cleveland; (Thundercats vid). Gary Rice, Tiptree, Essex; (Thundercats vid). Alex Newman, London N6; (Thundercats vid). D Cunningham, Eastbourne, East Sussex; (Thundercats vid). David Hopkins, Northolt, Middx; (Thundercats vid). J Walker, Dovercourt, Harwich, Essex; (Thundercats vid). A Smith, Aughton Lancs; (Thundercats vid). T Lewis, Horndean, Hants; (Gary Lineker board game). S Allen, Wroughton, Wilts; (Gary Lineker board game). A Leung, Coombe Lane West, Kingston Upon Thames; (Gary Lineker board game). M Rennie, Altyre, Forres, Morayshire; (Gary Lineker board game). M Saunders, Akeley, Nr Buckingham; (Gary Lineker board game). R Jones, Pencla ndd, Swansea; (Gary Lineker board game). Julio Riesco, Pensby, Wirral, Merseyside; (Gary Lineker board game). J V Fletcher, Harrogate, N Yorkshire; (Model Ferrari). William Salt, Riddings Estate, Scunthrope; (Model Stealth). Bruce Humby, Wimborne, Dorset; (J Dredd RPG) Stuart Houlton, Luton, Bedfordshire; (Sword of Omens). Neil Parker, Yarm, Cleveland; (RuneQuest Ninja). Richard Cooke, Oakhanger, Cheshire; (Airfix & Poster). Faisal Hamid, Perth, Scotland; (Airfix & Poster). Robert Colston, Exeter, Devon; (Airfix & Poster). Paul Ashmore, Woodhouse, Sheffield; (Airfix & Poster). G Shcoles, Deeside, Clwyd; (Cap & Poster). Michael Sharpe, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire; (Cap & Poster). Mark Watkins, Amersham, Bucks; (Cap & Poster). Michael Hinc, Mid-Glam, South Wales; (Cap & Poster). Lucy Aves, Cambridge; (Cap & Poster). Michael Worsly, Haydock, Merseyside; (Airfix & Poster). William Pratt, Exmouth, Devon; (Airfix & Poster). Daniel Coffey, Erdington, Birmingham; (Airfix & Poster). B Spencer, Colwick, Nottingham; (Airfix & Poster). Terry Richard, Oakwood, West Yorkshire; (Airfix & Poster). Andrea Morris, Tyldesley, Manchester; (Airfix & Poster). Steven Morris, Horsham, West Sussex; (Cap & Poster). Neal Hudson, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands; (Cap & Poster). Stewart Brown, Edinburgh; (Cap & Poster). Shane Clarke, Spixworth, Norfolk; (Cap & Poster). Paul McHale, Arle, Cheltenham, Glos; (Cap & Poster). Brett Patterson, Sheffield; (Cap & Poster). Hadly, Shopshire; (Cap & Poster). Craig Bainbridge Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland; (Cap & Poster). Richard Gray, Lessingham, Norfolk; (Cap & Poster). Niaz Sawadizadeh, Twickenham, Middlesex; (Cap & Poster). Robert Dent, Bethel, St Austell, Cornwall; (Cap & Poster). Mauree Witek, Brighton, Sussex; (Mask Rhino). P Beddows, Shrewsbury, Shropshire; (Cap & Poster). Liz Best, Tadley Hants; (Action Force Striker). Darren Jones, Whitchurch, Hants; (Water Machine Gun). Hugh Jackson, Clifford Moor Road, Boston Spa, Wetherby; (Activision Mug & Poster). Stuart Murphy, Great Baddow, Essex; (Activision Mug & Poster). Simon Orchard, Norton-Sub-Hamidon, Somerset; (Activision Mug & Poster). Mr B Mooney, Washington Tyne & Wear; (Activision Mug & Poster). Anthony Croasdale, Mellor, Lancs; (Activision Mug & Poster). Adrian Hemsly, Portslade, Sussex; (Activision Mug & Poster). Hamish McKechme-Sharma, Hounselow, Middlesex; (Activision Mug & Poster). Darren Cahill, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire; (Activision Mug & Poster). David Proctor, Oswaldtwistle, Lancs; (Activision Mug & Poster). Jullian Thomas Hailsham, East Sussex; (Activision Mug & Poster). Richard Earle, Darlington, Co. Durham; (Activision Mug & Poster). D Mitchell Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent; (Activision Mug & Poster). Mark Rodgers, Tingley, Wakefield; (Activision Mug & Poster). Peter Stanforth, Luton, Beds; (Activision Mug & Poster). R Hanlon Shard End, Birmingham; (Activision Mug & Poster). Derren Young, Ferryhill, Co. Durham; (Activision Mug & Poster). Jon Hathaway, North Allerton, North Yorkshire; (Activision Mug & Poster). Alex Newman, London; (Activision Mug & Poster). Mr S J Ayres, Stanmore, Middlesex; (Activision Mug & Poster). Simon Preston, Nr Chorley, Lancashire; (Activision Mug & Poster). David Papworth, Aspley, Nottingham; (Activision Mug & Poster). Paul Baker, Haywards Heath, Sussex; (Activision Mug & Poster). Mr N Goddard, St Leonards-On-Sea, East Sussex; (Druid II). David Bemes, Cookstown, Co. Tyrone; (Druid II). Andrew Wraith Blackpool, Lancs; (Druid II). Martin Foulkes, Temperley, Cheshire; (Bubble Bobble). Stephen Butler, Ternej, Holland; (Bubble Bobble). Jason Wharton, Skelmersdale, Lancs; (Bubble Bobble).

W L Ponsford, Bitterne, Southampton; (Revs). Mr Robert Barry, New Tredegar, Gwent; (Revs). Richard Barnes, Guildford, Surrey; (Revs). Jonathan Jones, Ammanford, S Wales; (Tracker). Mr C T Wong, Bletchly, Milton Keynes; (Advanced Art Studio). Mark Sontall, Shirley, Surrey; (Knight Orc). Kolin Robertson, Fleet Hargate, Lincs; (Guild of Thieves). Graham Edwards, Knowle, W Mids; (Pawn). Peter Beach, Solihull, West Midlands; (Warhawk). Mr S Hayward, Southbourne, Dorset; (Warhawk). Andrew Loizos, Thornton Heath, Surrey; (Warhawk). Abid Hussain, Longsight, Manchester; (Warhawk). Neil Daalway, Whittinton, Staffs; (Thrust). Jamie Cosse, Warsash, Hants; (Thrust). J Best, Battersea, London; (Thrust). J Blues, Bradford, West Yorks; (Thrust).



RAINBIRD COMP

We offered you the chance of winning a complete set of Rainbird adventures and a whizz clank disk drive to boot them on. All you had to do was put yourself in the position of the CU crew. Not easy. We were thirsty and because we're so badly paid and it was the end of the month we had no money to quaff ale with in the hostelry next door. The answer we wanted to hear from the options we gave you was to approach the fat ad manager of ad fat C&VG and borrow a five spot (although it has to be said the new editor is nearly as fat and just as rich). When we make it into the pub we find it's packed. We're just about to head upstairs when Mike spots the fruitie has nine nudges. The solution here is clear. MP cannot walk past a fruit machine without checking whether it is ready to cough up. Therefore they play.

Most of you guessed right. Are we that predictable? But first out the bag was Wayne Burton of Grimethorpe, Barnsley. Well done, my son, adventuring you shall go.

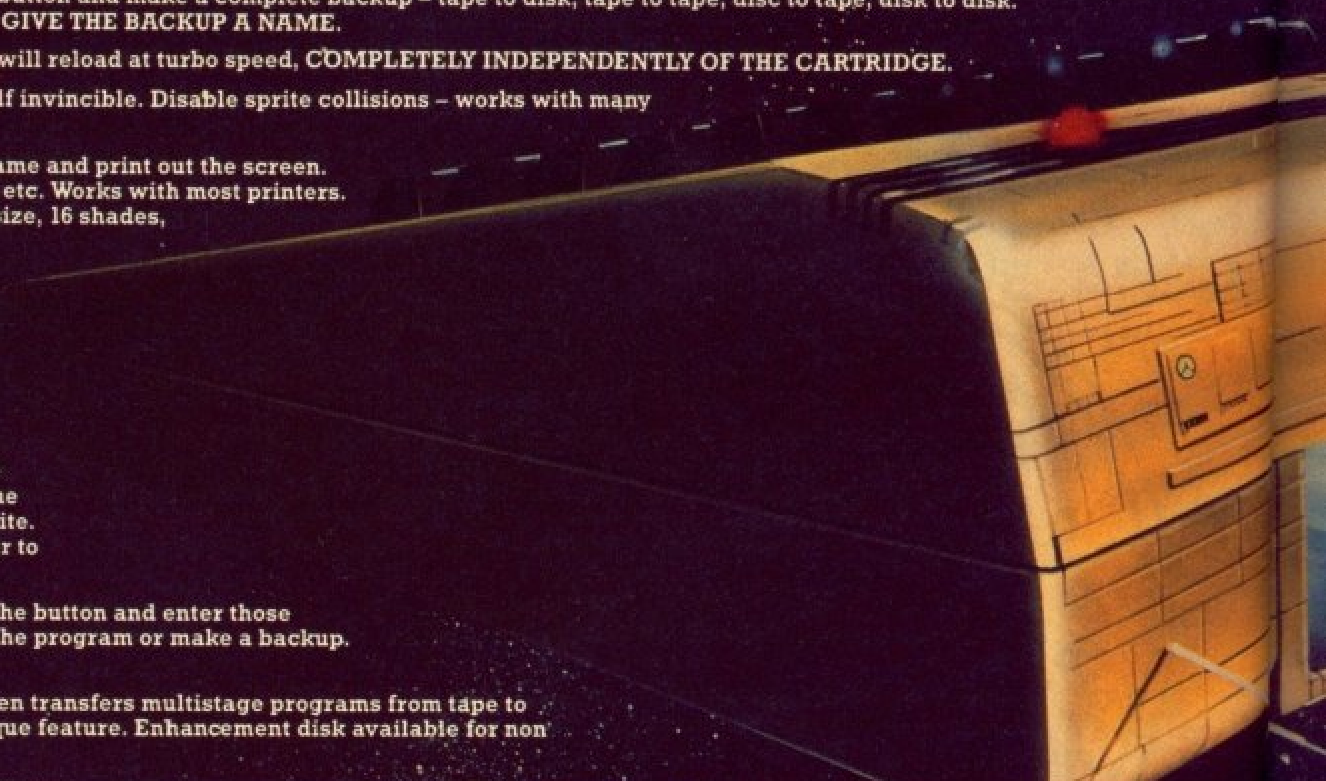
TOTAL BACKUP POWER
Now ACTION REPLAY

NOW EVEN MORE POWERFUL, MORE FRIENDLY AND WILL

ONLY £29·99 POST FREE

Action Replay works by taking a *'SNAPSHOT'* of the program in memory so it doesn't matter how the program was loaded – from tape or disk – at normal or turbo speed.

- **WARP 25. THE WORLD'S FASTEST SERIAL DISK TURBO – NOW EVEN FASTER! LOADS 200 BLOCKS IN 6 SECONDS! 240 BLOCKS IN 7 SECONDS!** – that's even faster than some parallel systems. Built into the cartridge – no extra hardware or software required. Includes supercast, warpsave, scratch, filecopy/convert. Integrated with normal disk turbo for supercompatibility – auto detects warp or normal format so no special load commands are required. Turbo and Warp 25 speed are entirely independent of the cartridge with SUPERBOOT.
- **SIMPLE TO USE:** Just press the button and make a complete backup – tape to disk, tape to tape, disc to tape, disk to disk. THE PROCESS IS AUTOMATIC – JUST GIVE THE BACKUP A NAME.
- **TURBO RELOAD.** All backups will reload at turbo speed, COMPLETELY INDEPENDENTLY OF THE CARTRIDGE.
- **SPRITE KILLER.** Make yourself invincible. Disable sprite collisions – works with many programs.
- **PRINTER DUMP.** Freeze any game and print out the screen. Eg. loading picture, high score screen etc. Works with most printers. MPS 801, 803, Star, Epson etc. Double size, 16 shades, reverse print option. Very versatile – no user knowledge required.
- **PICTURE SAVE.** Save any Hires multicolour screen to disk at the push of a button. Compatible with Blazing Paddles, Koala, Artist 64, Image System etc.
- **SPRITE MONITOR.** Unique Sprite monitors allows you to freeze the action and view all the sprites, watch the sprite animation, save or delete any sprite. Load sprites from one game into another to make customised programs.
- **POKES/CHEAT MODE.** Press the button and enter those pokes for extra lives etc., then restart the program or make a backup. Ideal for custom games.
- **MULTISTAGE TRANSFER.** Even transfers multistage programs from tape to disk. The extra parts fast load – a unique feature. Enhancement disk available for non standard multi-loaders (see below).
- **SUPER COMPACTOR.** Ultra efficient program compaction techniques. Each program saved as a single file. 3 programs per disk side – 6 programs per disk, if you use both sides.
- **TEXT MODIFY.** Change title screens, high score screens etc. Put your own name into a game then restart it or make a backup to tape or disk. Very simple to use.
- **MONITOR.** Full feature 'Floating' type MACHINE CODE MONITOR. All standard features plus many more:- assemble, disassemble, hex dump, interpret, transfer, compare, fill, hunt, number conversion, bank switching, relocate, load/save etc. Uses no memory. Full printer support.
- **DISK MONITOR.** A special monitor for use on the RAM inside your disk drive. All the usual commands – a useful hacking tool.
- **WHOLE DISK COPY.** Copy a full unprotected disk in under two minutes with only one drive.
- **FAST FILE COPY.** Works with standard and Warp 25 files of up to 249 blocks. Converts formats to and from Warp 25.
- **FAST FORMAT.** Under 20 seconds.
- **TOOLKIT COMMANDS.** A whole range of useful new commands including: AUTO LINE NUMBERING, DELETE, MERGE, APPEND, OLD, LINESAVE, etc., PRINTERLISTER – list any program (including directory) directly from disk to printer or screen without corrupting memory.
- **REDEFINED FUNCTION KEYS.** Single stroke commands for operation of many common commands including: LOAD, SAVE, DIR. Load from directory – no need to type in filename.
- **TAPE TURBO.** Designed to make turbo load/save for your own programs. No screen blanking during loading.



REMEMBER all features are built in and available at the touch of a key. All features work with both **TAPE** and **DISK.** (Except multipart transfer & disk file utility).

ENHANCEMENT DISK

Contains routines for transferring many of the non-standard multi-load games from tape to disk. Over 40 titles. Latest additions are **LAST NINJA, ROAD RUNNER** (infinitive lives option), **BLOOD 'N' GUTS** (play any event), **DECEPTOR, LEADERBOARD EXEC** and **WORLD CLASS, KILLED UNTIL DEAD, MASK, INDIANA JONES, IMPLOSION, TAIPAN,** plus all the classics including **SUMMER GAMES, WORLD GAMES, DRAGONS LAIR** 1 and 2, **GAUNTLET, SUPERCYCLE** etc. Works in conjunction with **ACTION REPLAY.**

Disk includes **GRAPHIC SLIDESHOW** for displaying pictures saved with **ACTION REPLAY.** Plus Warp 25, Superboot – non Action Replay owners can speed up their 'expert' or 'freeze machine' programs to see what they have been missing.

TAKES A QUANTUM LEAP
MK IV HAS ARRIVED!

FOR CBM64/128

BACKUP MORE PROGRAMS THAN ANY RIVAL UTILITY.

BUT THATS NOT ALL ... NOW AVAILABLE FOR THE SERIOUS PROGRAM HACKER
ACTION REPLAY IV 'PROFESSIONAL'™

● All the features of the normal Action Replay IV but with an amazing on board LSI LOGIC PROCESSING CHIP. Plus 32K operating system ROM and 8K RAM CHIP. The first RAM/ROM based cartridge of its type!



ALL THE MK IV FEATURES PLUS ...

● **FULLY INTEGRATED OPERATION.** The MK IV 'Professional' has all the features of the MK IV plus an onboard custom LSI LOGIC PROCESSING CHIP that integrates the whole range of utilities and makes them available at the press of a button at any time.

● **EXTENDED MONITOR.** The 'Professional' has an extra powerful machine code monitor. Because it has both ROM and RAM at its disposal the Professional can freeze any program and then examine the WHOLE OF COMPUTER MEMORY in its frozen state including screen RAM, ZERO PAGE and STACK.

Full feature disassembly, compare, fill, transfer, hunt, relocate, jump etc. etc. In fact all the features of the best fully blown monitor available. Return to the frozen program at the press of a key at the point you left it! An absolute must for the program hacker – or even the programmer who needs to de-bug his program.

● **INTELLIGENT HARDWARE.** The Professional hardware is unmatched anywhere in the world today. The special logic processing chip can cope with protection methods as they appear by reacting to its environment.

MK IV PROFESSIONAL ONLY £34·99 POST FREE

WARP 25 Reloads an average BACK-UP in 6 Seconds!!

UPGRADE INFORMATION

MK III TO MK IV. Just send £9.99 and we will send you the new MK IV Chip to plug into your cartridge. Fitting is very easy.
MK III TO MK IV 'PROFESSIONAL'. Send your old cartridge plus £19.99 and we will send you a new Professional MK IV.

MK 2 Action Replay owners can get £10 as part exchange against either the MK IV or Professional. Send old cartridge plus balance.

PERFORMANCE PROMISE

Action Replay will backup any program that any other cartridge can backup – and more! It also has an unmatched range of onboard features. Before you buy check our competitors ads to see what they offer and see how many of the Action Replay MK IV features are either not there or have to be loaded from Supergate disks etc. When you buy Action Replay if you don't find our claims to be true then return it within 14 days for a full refund.

ALL ORDERS NORMALLY DESPATCHED WITHIN 48 HRS

HOW TO ORDER ...

BY PHONE	BY POST	EUROPEAN ORDERS
0782 273815 24 hr Credit Card Line	Send cheques/PO's made payable to 'Datel Electronics'	ADD £1.00 P+P **OTHER COUNTRIES** ADD £3.00 P+P Fax Orders 0782 264510

DATEL ELECTRONICS

UNITS 8/9, DEWSBURY ROAD, FENTON INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, FENTON, STOKE-ON-TRENT.

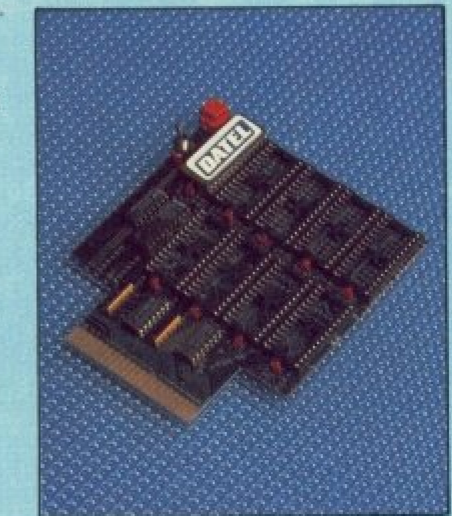
SALES ONLY	TECHNICAL ONLY
0782 273815	0782 202258

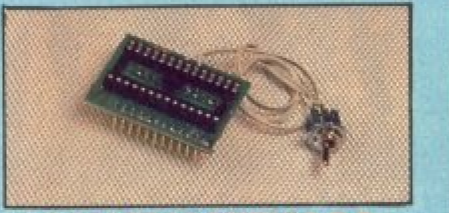
DATEL ELECTRONICS

256K SUPEROM EXPANDER

- Now you can select from any of 8 32K EPROMs instantly.
- 8 sockets to accept upto a 32K EPROM in each.
- On board operating system — no programs to load.
- Program your own EPROMs using our EPROM programmer.
- No need to have loads of cartridges — just make a selection from the Superom menu.
- Directory of utilities on power up.
- Fully menu driven on power up.
- Select any slot under software controls.
- Unique EPROM generator feature will take your own programs — basic or m/c and turn them into autostart EPROMs. (EPROM burner required).
- Accepts 2764/27128/27256 EPROMs.
- On board unstoppable reset.

ONLY £29.99



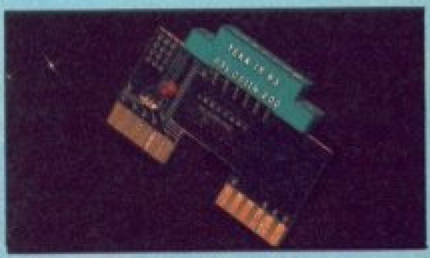


4 WAY KERNAL BOARD

- This board fits in place of the kernal in your 64 and accepts a 16K or 32K replacement kernal giving 2 or 4 different operating systems.
- Just flick the switch supplied to select between systems.
- This is a carrier only — ready to accept your own chip.
- Now you can have all your different systems available at one time.

ONLY £8.99

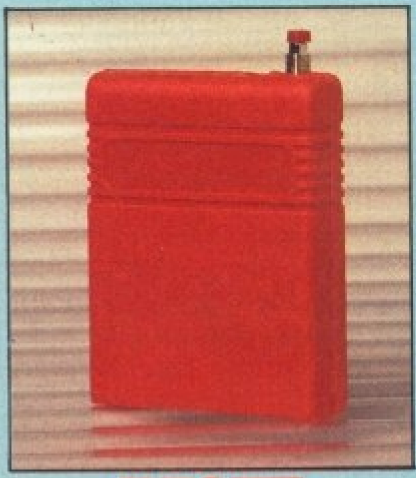
5 WAY BOARD **ONLY £12.99**



CLONEMASTER™

- Makes tape to tape back-ups.
- Works with even Turbo Loaders etc.
- Requires access to two CBM type data recorders.
- Makes perfect copies.
- Very simple to use.
- LED level indicator.

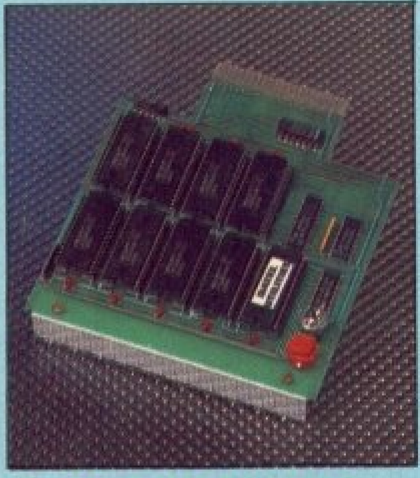
ONLY £9.99 POST FREE



RESET CARTRIDGE

- Unstoppable reset button.
- Resets even so called "unstoppable" programs.
- Add pokes from magazines etc.
- Fits in cartridge port.
- Simply plug in.

ONLY £5.99



DUPLIKATOR™

- Copies whole disk in one pass — only one drive required!
- Makes back-up copies in eight seconds!!
- Duplikator is the fastest, most efficient and easiest to use disk copying system ever conceived.
- Comes complete with 256K on-board ram and it's own operating system — no software to load.
- Makes multiple copies from one original.
- Full disk verification during back-up process.
- Copies standard software as well as errors 21-29 and upto 40 tracks.
- Full disk error check in eight seconds.
- Full disk verify against ram in fifteen seconds.
- A must for clubs, user groups etc. How else can you copy over 250 disks and hour for less than £100.
- Comes complete with on/off switch and reset button.
- Fitted in minutes — no soldering usually required.

ONLY £89.99



DEEP SCAN BURST NIBBLER™

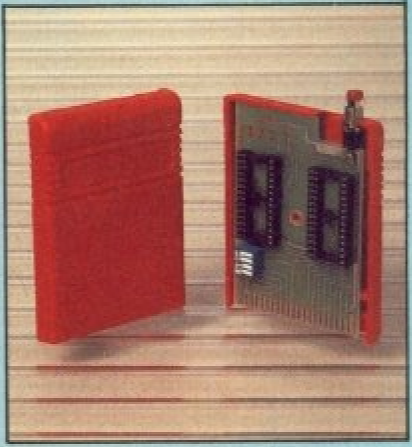
- The most powerful disk nibbler available anywhere, at any price!
- Burst Nibbler is actually a two part system — a software package **and** a parallel cable to connect the 1541/1570/1571 to 64/128 (state type).
- What gives Burst Nibbler its power? Conventional nibblers have to decode the data from the disk before it can transfer it using the serial bus — when non standard data is encountered they are beat. Burst Nibbler transfers data as raw GCR code via the parallel cable without the need to decode it so you get a perfect copy of the original.

● Will nibble upto 41 tracks. ● Copy a whole disk in under 2 minutes. ● Full instructions.
● Regular updates — we always ship the latest. ● Fitted in minutes — no soldering usually required.
● Full or ½ tracks. ● No need to buy parallel cable if you have Disk Demon/Dolphin etc.
● Cable has throughbus extension for other add ons.

- Whether to choose FastHack'em or Burst Nibbler? Fast Hack'Em is unbeatable value as an "all-rounder" — with nibblers, 1 or 2 drive copy, format, file copy, 1571 copy etc. etc., so if you have a more general requirement perhaps FastHack'Em is for you. Burst Nibbler is a pure nibbler second to none, for the reasons stated. So if it's just making backups you are interested in, there is no other product to beat it.

ONLY £24.99 COMPLETE

SOFTWARE ONLY £12.99 CABLE ONLY £14.99



16K EPROM BOARD

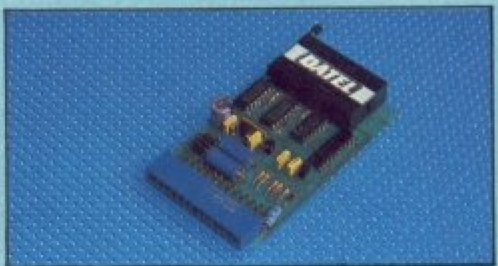
- Accepts 2 x 8K EPROMs.
- Switchable to configure as 2 x 8K or 16K or off.
- On board unstoppable reset.
- Full instructions.

ONLY £8.99

DISK NOTCHER

- Quickly and easily double your disk capacity.
- Use both sides of your disks.
- Simple to use.
- Takes seconds.

ONLY £4.99

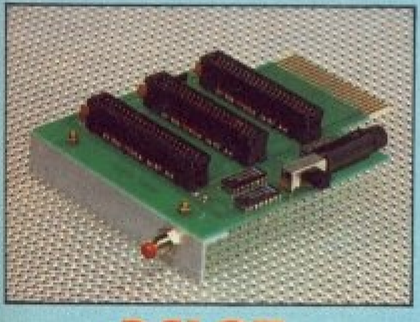


EPROMMER 64™

- A top quality, easy-to-use EPROM programmer for the 64/128.
- Fully menu driven software/hardware package makes programming/reading/verifying/copying EPROMs simplicity itself.
- Will program 2716, 2732, 2764, 27128 and 27256 chips. 12.5, 21 or 25 volts.
- Fits into user port for maximum compatibility with cartridges/Superom Board etc.
- Full feature system — all functions covered including device check/verify.
- We believe Eprommer 64 is the most comprehensive, most friendly and best value for money programmer available for the 64/128.
- Ideal companion for Superom Board, Cartridge Development System, our kernal expanders or indeed any EPROM base project.
- Comes complete with instructions — plus the cartridge handbook.

ONLY £39.99 COMPLETE

DATEL ELECTRONICS



3 SLOT MOTHERBOARD

Save wear and tear on your Expansion Port

- ❑ Accepts 3 cartridges.
- ❑ Onboard safety fuse.
- ❑ Switch in/out any slot.
- ❑ High grade PCB.
- ❑ Fully buffered.
- ❑ Reset button.

ONLY £16.99

DATA RECORDER

- ❑ Quality Commodore compatible data recorder.
- ❑ Pause control.
- ❑ Suitable for 64/128.
- ❑ Counter.
- ❑ Send now for quick delivery.

ONLY £24.99



SMART CART ™

Now you can have an 8K or 32K cartridge that you program like RAM then acts like ROM!

- ❑ 8K or 32K pseudo ROM.
- ❑ Battery backed to last up to 5 years (lithium battery).
- ❑ Simply load the program you require – then flick the switch. The cartridge can then be removed just like a ROM cartridge.
- ❑ Make your own cartridges including autostart types – without an EPROM burner.
- ❑ Can be switched on or off board via software.
- ❑ I/O 2 slot open for special programming techniques.
- ❑ 32K version has 4 x 8K pages.
- ❑ Some knowledge of M/C is helpful – but full instruction are provided.

8K VERSION £14.99
32K VERSION £29.99

SMARTCART UTILITIES

A series of utility programs for use with Smartcart. Simply load in the program and you have a powerful cartridge. When you have a different requirement – load in another program and you have a new cartridge. The process takes seconds, and can be repeated any number of times.

We intend to release a range of programs. The first available are:

DISKMATE II

❑ all the features of Diskmate II (see ad). Loaded in seconds – with full instructions. ONLY £9.99



PRINTER IV

Now you can turn your MPS 801 into 4 printers in one!!

- ❑ Alternative character set ROM – fitted in seconds.
- ❑ All four sets have true descenders.
- ❑ 100% compatible with all software.
- ❑ Descender. ❑ Eclipse.
- ❑ Scribe. ❑ Future.
- ❑ Choose any set at the flick of a switch.

"For anyone who uses their printer often this chip is a must. It's quick and easy to use and the end results are impressive" – Your Commodore, Jan 87.

ONLY £19.99

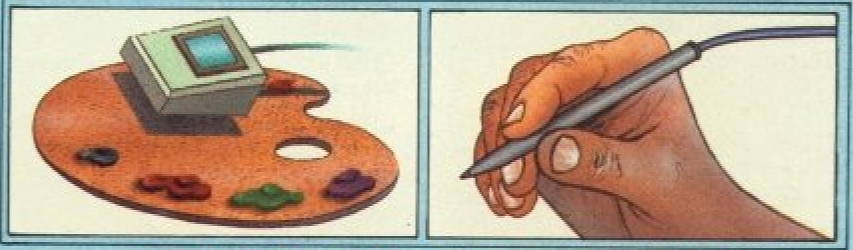


TURBO ROM II

Turbo Rom II is a replacement for the actual kernal inside your 64. It provides superfast load/save routines.

- ❑ Loads most programs at 5-6 times normal speed.
- ❑ Saves at 5-6 times normal.
- ❑ Improved DOS support including 10 sec format.
- ❑ Programmed function keys:- load, directory, old, etc.
- ❑ Return to normal kernal at flick of a switch.
- ❑ FCOPY – 250 block file copier.
- ❑ FLOAD – special I/O loader.
- ❑ Plus lots more.
- ❑ Fitted in minutes – no soldering usually required. (On some 64's the old ROM may have to be desoldered).

ONLY £14.99



BLAZING PADDLES

A complete lightpen/graphics illustrator package.

- ❑ A fully icon/menu driven graphics package of a calibre which should cost much more.
- ❑ Complete with a fibre optical lightpen system for pin point accuracy.
- ❑ Multi feature software including:
  - ● Range of brushes ● Airbrush ● Rectangle ● Circle ● Rubberbanding ● Lines ● Freehand
  - ● Zoom mode ● Printer dump ● Load/save ● Advanced colour mixing – over 200 hues!!
  - ● Cut and paste allows shapes/windows/pictures to be saved to/from tape/disk.
- ❑ Blazing Paddles will also work with many other input devices including; Joysticks, Mice, Graphics Tablets, Trackball etc.
- ❑ Pictures can be saved from Action Replay and edited with Blazing Paddles.

Complete Blazing Paddles & Lightpen ONLY £24.99

Blazing Paddles available separately for £12.99

TOOLKIT IV

The ultimate disk toolkit for the 1540/1541

- ❑ A disk toolkit is an absolute must for the serious disk hacker. Toolkit IV has more features than most for less.
- ❑ DISK DOCTOR V2 – Read and write any track and sector including extra and renumbered tracks. Repair damaged sectors. Look underneath read errors.
- ❑ HEADER/GAP EDITOR – Decodes and displays ALL header information including off bytes and header gap. Rewrite the entire header and header gap. Renumber sectors. Also edit any sector tail gap.
- ❑ DISK LOOK – Sort directory. Recover lost files. Display file start/end addresses. Disassemble any file program directly from the disk to SCREEN or PRINTER including undocumented opcodes. Edit Bam. Much, much more.
- ❑ FILE COMPACTOR – Can compact machine programs by up to 50%. Saves disk space. Compacted programs run as normal.
- ❑ FAST DISK COPY – Copy an entire disk in 2 minutes or less using single 1541.
- ❑ FAST FILE COPY – Selective file copy. Works at up to 6 times normal speed.
- ❑ FORMATTER – 10 second format an entire disk or format any individual track or half track 0 to 41. Redefine any of 30 parameters to create or recreate unique disk formats.
- ❑ ERROR EDIT – Quickly find and recreate all read errors including extra and renumbered tracks or sectors and half tracks from 0 to 41. Even recreates data under errors and allows you to redefine any necessary parameters.

ONLY £9.99

RAM DISK

- ❑ Turn your Smart Cart into a 32K RAM/disk.
- ❑ 32K of instant storage area for files/programs.
- ❑ Load/save instantly.
- ❑ Disk type commands: load, save, directory, scratch.
- ❑ Program data retained when computer is switched off!
- ❑ Full command set with instructions.

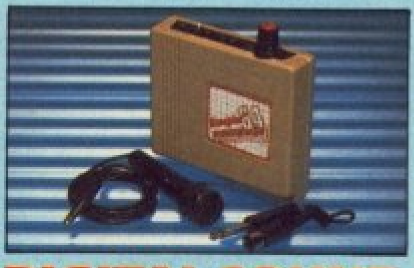
ONLY £9.99

ROBOTEK 64

Model & Robot Control made easy

- ❑ Robotek 64 is a comprehensive hardware/software package which enables you to connect your 64/128 to the outside world.
- ❑ 4 output channels – each with onboard relay.
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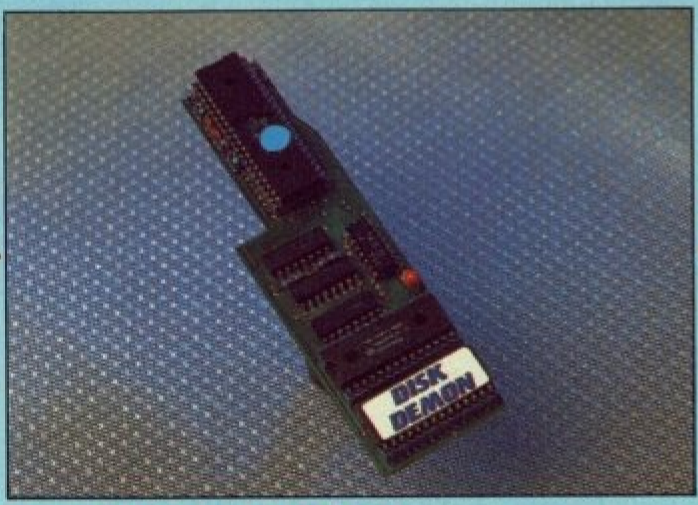
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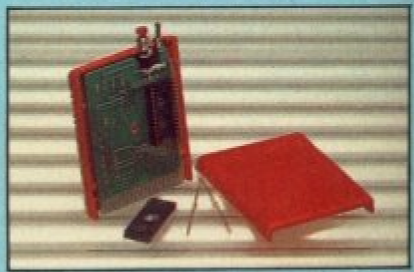
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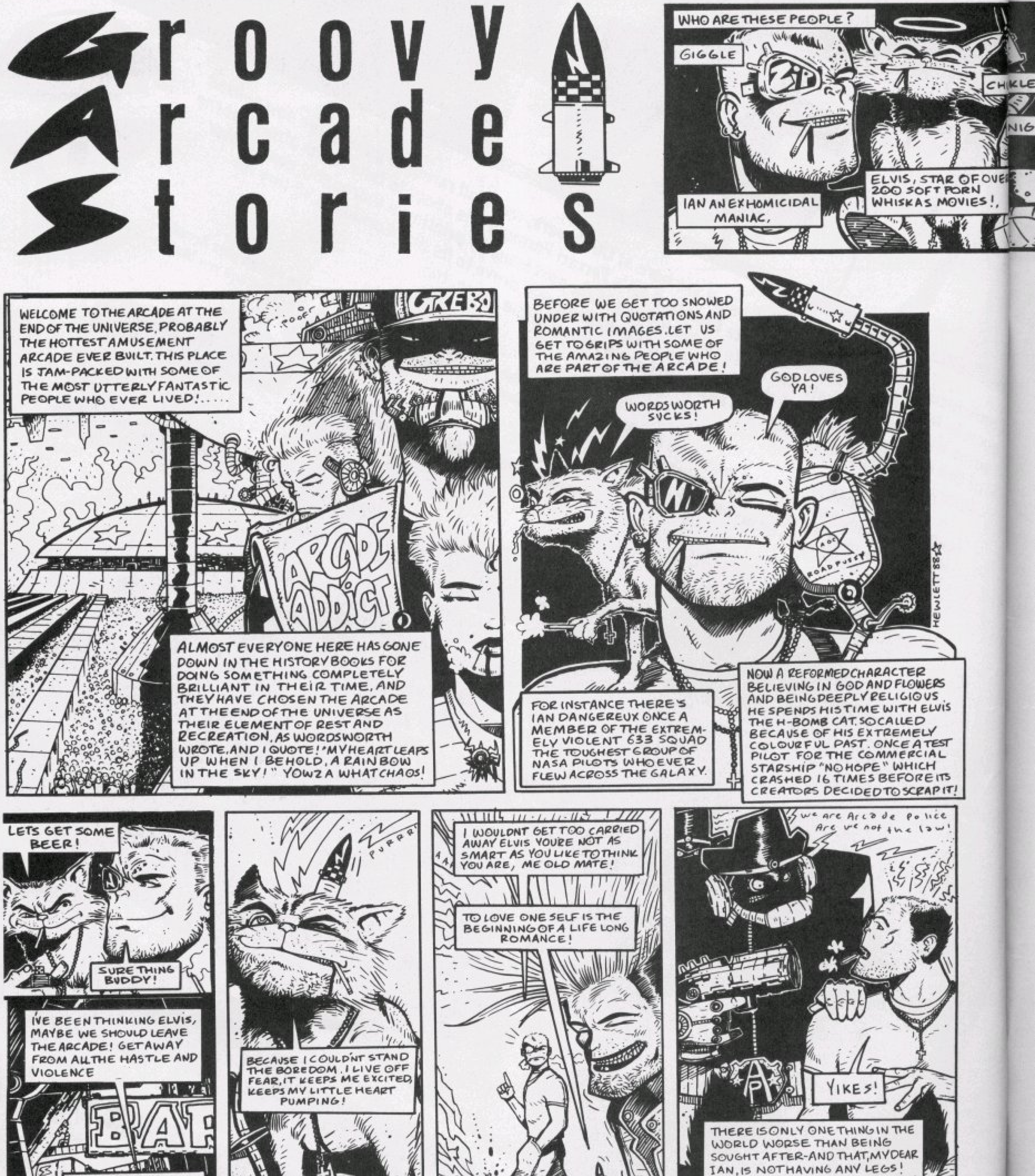
NEXT MONTH

Confirmed motor racing fans that we all are here at CU Towers, we're all raring to go with the new season soon to be underway. How fortunate then that EA's Ferrari Formula 1 is about to take to the streets at the same time. We celebrate the whole turbocharged thing next issue by printing a thoroughly gear poster of the machine which Michale Alboretto and Gerhard Berger drove to its first Formula 1 victory for four years in the last series. Oh, and we'll have a review of the game, too.

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All your favourite bits, reviews of *Impossible Mission II* and *Hotball* the first arcade football game for the Amiga plus Arcades, Play To Win, more top pokes, and previews of up-and-coming hot shots (*don't mention that name . . . Ed*) So, see you March 26th with a pound and a bit in your mitt.





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GREBO
ARCADE ADDICT
ALMOST EVERYONE HERE HAS GONE DOWN IN THE HISTORY BOOKS FOR DOING SOMETHING COMPLETELY BRILLIANT IN THEIR TIME, AND THEY HAVE CHOSEN THE ARCADE AT THE END OF THE UNIVERSE AS THEIR ELEMENT OF REST AND RECREATION, AS WORDSWORTH WROTE, AND I QUOTE: "MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BEHOLD, A RAINBOW IN THE SKY!" YOWZA WHATCHAOS!
BEFORE WE GET TOO SNOWED UNDER WITH QUOTATIONS AND ROMANTIC IMAGES. LET US GET TO GRIPS WITH SOME OF THE AMAZING PEOPLE WHO ARE PART OF THE ARCADE!
WORDSWORTH SUCKS!
GOD LOVES YA!
ROAD PUSSY
HEWLETT 88
FOR INSTANCE THERE'S IAN DANGEREUX ONCE A MEMBER OF THE EXTREMELY VIOLENT 633 SQUAD THE TOUGHEST GROUP OF NASA PILOTS WHO EVER FLEW ACROSS THE GALAXY.
NOW A REFORMED CHARACTER BELIEVING IN GOD AND FLOWERS AND BEING DEEPLY RELIGIOUS HE SPENDS HIS TIME WITH ELVIS THE H-BOMB CAT. SO CALLED BECAUSE OF HIS EXTREMELY COLOURFUL PAST. ONCE A TEST PILOT FOR THE COMMERCIAL STARSHIP "NO HOPE" WHICH CRASHED 16 TIMES BEFORE ITS CREATORS DECIDED TO SCRAP IT!
LETS GET SOME BEER!
SURE THING BUDDY!
I'VE BEEN THINKING ELVIS, MAYBE WE SHOULD LEAVE THE ARCADE! GET AWAY FROM ALL THE HASTLE AND VIOLENCE
BAR
YOU MEAN SOME SUN-DRENCHED SHORE WAY OF IN THE GAY SYSTEM SOME WHERE. WHERE NOONE CAN FIND US!?
YER WHY NOT?!
PURRR
BECAUSE I COULDN'T STAND THE BOREDOM. I LIVE OFF FEAR, IT KEEPS ME EXCITED, KEEPS MY LITTLE HEART PUMPING!
☆?!
I WOULDNT GET TOO CARRIED AWAY ELVIS YOU'RE NOT AS SMART AS YOU LIKE TO THINK YOU ARE, ME OLD MATE!
TO LOVE ONE SELF IS THE BEGINNING OF A LIFE LONG ROMANCE!
YER WELL JUST REMEMBER THE ARCADE POLICE ARE STILL AFTER YOU FOR THE TROUBLE YOU CAUSED IN DUCK WORLD AND BEING SOUGHT AFTER BY THE FUZZ IS A BAD THING!
we are Arcade Police Are we not the law!
AP
YIKES!
THERE IS ONLY ONE THING IN THE WORLD WORSE THAN BEING SOUGHT AFTER - AND THAT, MY DEAR IAN, IS NOT HAVING ANY LEGS! HAW HAW. HAW. HAW! ... HAW!


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SNIGGER
SMURK
MANIC
MAD!
DAISY PART-TIME CLEANER AND FULL TIME COLONIAL MARINE.
TOMMY WEIGHT, ARCADE WIZARD AND TREND SETTER!
ARCADE POLICEMAN......NASTY!
WHAT ARE THEY DOING HERE?
READ ON AND FIND OUT!...
AINT THAT RIGHT GUYS? YOUVE ALWAYS HAD A DEEP ROOTED INTEREST IN STAND UP COMEDY, THATS WHY I FEEL OBLIGED TO INVITE YOU TO THE SALVATION ARMY PICNIC OVER IN ANGEL PARK!... WHY ME AND MY BUDDY IAN WERE JUST ON OUR WAY THERE NOW!......
I DONT THINK THEY'RE VERY AMUSED ELVIS!
ARE YOU SERIOUS? ARCADE POLICEMEN HAVE GOT A GREAT SENCE OF HUMOUR!
GRRR
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT, PUSSY!
DONT BE STUPID OFFICER, I GOT FAR TOO MUCH TO SAY FOR MYSELF......!
AH..DONT SQUEEZE MY NECK SO TIGHT, YOU'LL CHOKE ME! KOFF——KOFF.
UH!
KRAK!
ELVIS!
OH LORD GIVE ME STRENGTH ... YOU BASKITS KILLED MY BEST PAL... IM GONNA KILL YOU!... SOB SOB......
BUT....
GIT IM OVER!☆
THATS IT IAN, DISTRACT THE NICE POLICEMEN JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO ......
GIT IM OVER!☆
CLICK
PHUT!
RASP!
OH GOD WHY DOES NOTHING WORK WHEN YOU REALLY NEED IT BAD?.........
AH..OFFICERS, AS I WAS SAYING!...
CLICK! CLICK!
CLICK!
CLICK
IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE SALVATION ARMY, WE COULD ALWAYS HIT THE GIRL GUIDES SHIN DIG OVER AT THE DOLPHIN ARIUM....HA....HU?
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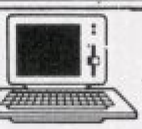
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TOMMY'S TIPS

Overlap

Help! I own a Commodore 128. When programming graphics in 128 mode, and 64 mode, I am unable to stop adjacent colours overlapping. Any ideas to stop this would be most welcome.

Is there any other free memory in the 128 apart from hex $ϘOFA—OOFE?

Hope you can help.
Daniel Jones,
Worthing, West Sussex

There is a problem when using graphics in that the colour map is still geared to the 8×8 matrix of the text screen. This means that when any lines cross, or in any way enter the same 8×8 dot area, they must be the same colour within that grid. Hence you draw one line in blue, then an adjacent line in red and suddenly find that the original line has turned red in places as well. There is a way round the problem, not absolutely perfect, but better than nothing.

By using the 'multi-colour' mode you can get 4 colours per 8×8 area which allows for a background colour plus 3 others, so in theory you could have 3 lines of different colour all passing through the same 8×8 area with no overlapping of colours. However, you can't get 'owt for nowt' as they say, and the penalty is that the horizontal resolution is halved (ie points in the X-plane are 2 pixels wide). This makes for a much coarser resolution which may not be acceptable so you have to make the choice between the two.

To get into multi-colour mode on the 64, for example, **POKE 53270, PEEK (53270) OR 16**. The four colours are then set using addresses 53281, 53282, 53283 and the normal map, using bit patterns 00, 01, 10, and 11 respectively to select them, using the '2-bit' value in the screen RAM instead of setting just one bit. The free memory for machine code routines on the 128 is much more complex than you might think, because for certain applications you can use RAM below ROM as well. By switching out the BASIC ROM (or even the KERNAL ROM) you can read the RAM at those addresses. In fact you can *write* to the RAM without having to swop out the ROMs first! Apart from these areas the only other potentially useful one is the cassette buffer at $0B00–0BC0, another 192 bytes. Be aware though that the disk auto-boot also uses this area.

Resets

I have a 64 and would like some information on how to reset the computer.

I have two reset switches one for use in the serial port and the other for use in the cartridge port, but neither will reset the computer.

I have also tried to reset the computer with a paper clip by connecting No 2 and 6 on the serial port but again with no luck.

Could you please help me.
A. Baker,
London

I have come across several cases where the serial reset line appears to have no effect. This seems to be the case with the later machines only so I can only assume that a chance of PCB design has perhaps removed the reset line from the port. I spoke to someone at Commodore about this some time ago and they hinted that there might have been a change, but couldn't say for certain. The reset using lines one and three on the User-port should still work on all machines however, so of all the options, that is the one I would recommend using. One point I would most strongly warn against however, is doing these sort of tests using paper clips, pliers and similar 'Heath Robinson' methods. Nine times out of ten they will work well, but on the tenth time you could just slip or get the wrong holes and short out two other vital lines; this could cause expensive damage to chips. Take the time to make up a connector so that you can check the connections *before* plugging it into the powered-up machine.

Bit map

I have a C128 and want to know how to get into the bit map in 80 col mode, and where to start the data that would fill the screen in the bit map mode, like the 40 col' bit map mode starts at address $2000.
Stephen Maskery,
Langton, Staffs.

The 128's 80-column map is not actually within the addressing range of the computer. What happened is that rather than take up an awfully large amount of space in the existing memory map, Commodore used an additional 16k of RAM for the 80-column screen map which was then accessed through two registers which *were* in the normal memory map. The result is that while more than adequate for text transfers, it gets rather slow when you try to do direct graphics using the 80-column bit-map because of this 'bottleneck' of the two registers. Fast graphics can be done on the 80-column screen, as several programs have demonstrated, but they use some fancy techniques for speeding up the process to get round the delay. If you want to experiment, the two registers are at 54784 and 54785.

However, that isn't the whole story because the 8563 display chip itself has 37 registers that control the functions of the chip. I don't have anything like the space to go into detail here, but a very good book for anyone interested in playing with the 8563 is 'Commodore 128 Assembley Language Programming' by Mark Andrews and published by SAMS which has a complete section on the subject.

Print poser

Could you please help me on the following points. These are to do with the Commodore 128 with a 1541 disk drive and a 1525 Printer.

When I use the above system in 64 mode running Easy Script/Easy File and other word Processor/database system the system works OK.

However if I use the computer in the 128 mode and the CP/M mode then strange things happen. If I use a word processor or any other CP/M program then the printer goes into its self test routine printing out the complete set of Commodore characters as if the self test/device change switch was in the 'T' position.

If the CP/M mode is running then when I select the CONTROL and P keys which directs the output ot the printer instead of the screen then the printer goes into the self test routine again, the only way to get out of this is to switch the printer off and on again and it is then listening again until I try to direct the output to the printer again where upon this thing happens again.

Is there a fault on the printer or computer which may cause this and if so could you please point me in the right direction to the faulty components? As I am capable of doing most repairs myself.

Or is it that the printer is not compatible with the 128 or CPM modes?

· A second point. Is there any way of giving this printer lower case descenders ie I.C. replacements etc. as in the MPS801 series of printers.

The third point is regarding the sound output on the 64 and 128 40-screen display this is accessed by pin 3 on the DIN connector is this the same Pin for 80 column display or is there a Pin output on the 80 column RGBI connector.
John Walker,
Gateshead.

One of the problems with the 1525 is that it was designed in the days before the C128 had even been thought of. It sounds very much as though the codes which the 128 mode and CP/M mode are sending it are not what the 1525 is looking for. This is especially true of CP/M which is set up on the 128 to use most of the newer Commodore printers. If the printer works perfectly with all programs and BASIC in 64 mode, then there is unlikely to be anything wrong with either the printer or the computer serial port; it is almost certainly a software problem. It may be possible to alter the CP/M BIOS file to send the correct codes for the 1525, but I don't have one to try and you will need a good CP/M manual to do it yourself.

Your second query on the possibility of getting lower case descenders on the 1525 is also doomed to failure. There is a software program that will turn your files into graphics files and print them in different fonts, but it has to be run separately after you have prepared the document using your normal WP program and is so slow that it really isn't worth the effort. The MPS801 ROM will not work with the 1525, so no hope there I'm afraid. I really think that unless cost is a major problem that you consider investing in a new printer — you really can't do justice to the 128 on



▲ *Hmm, these cheap memory expansion kits are a con . . .*

a 1525 these days, especially when there are so many inexpensive NLQ dot-matrix printers on the market.

TV display

● **I recently bought a Commodore 128, and I have a question regarding the use of the 80-column display. According to the user's guide, to use the 80-column display you need either an RGBI monitor or a 1901 monitor set to a certain position.**

I have a colour TV and I cannot afford to buy a monitor yet, so I would like to know whether there is any way of using an 80-column display on my colour TV.

I would greatly appreciate if you could help me with this problem.

Christakis Ionnou, London.

One of the problems with trying to use 80 column on a TV is that the resolution is often just not good enough. Some B&W TVs can produce an acceptable picture, but using a colour TV to display 80 columns can cause colour distortion effects which make the text virtually unreadable. There are certainly lots of interfaces around for converting the RGBI signal into RGB or composite video to allow a much wider range of monitors to be used, but I imagine that few companies would sell an interface for a TV when the end result is so uncertain. If any reader knows of such an interface then please get in touch, otherwise I am afraid you are limited to 40 columns until you can build up the readies!

Bad sprite

● **In your issue you told us how to use a joystick. I typed it in with my own data but all I got was a bad sprite. Also I had to delete line 20. Then I checked my data and it was right. PLEASE TELL ME HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? Also please answer my questions:**

1. How do your move a sprite?

2. How do you make sprites move and fire at each other?

3. How do you position sprites on the screen?

Please try and answer my questions. It would help a lot if you could

Nial O'Farrel and Kevin Kavanagh, Cork, Eire

Having checked back on the June issue I discover that gremlins made an appearance again! There is a misprint on line 20; it should read **FOR S=0 TO 62:POKE832+S,255:NEXT S** As for moving a sprite, all you have to do is to alter the X and Y co-ordinate registers for the sprite you want to move. Page 157 (Appendix O) of the 64 manual (unless you have a different version of course!) contains the 'map' of the sprite registers.

The sprite registers all start at address 53248 and the values given are added on to this start address; thus the X register for Sprite 0 is at 0 and the Y register is at 1 (actual addresses 53248 and 53249 respectively). Get the idea? By changing the values of these two locations you change the position of the sprite on the screen. For example, by adding 1 to each value inside a loop, the sprite will travel diagonally across the screen from left to right. The example program in the June issue does show how this works.

As for firing at each other, you can use either UDGs as the 'bullets' or other sprites; the restriction on the latter being that you are using up a limited number. What you have to do is maintain a record of the position of each bullet (using a variable) so that you know where it is on the screen, plus storing information on its direction and speed; not forgetting of course to check if it has hit anything. You then move the bullets in very much the same way as moving the sprites but probably at a faster speed — not very good using BASIC however, as it's normally much too slow to do all this. Positioning of sprites on the screen is the same as moving them. You work out where on the screen you want to put them, bearing in mind the values range from 0-319 in the horizontal (X) direction and 0-255 in the vertical (Y) direction (some of which will be off the visible area of the screen). You then POKE these values into the relevant X and Y registers, except that if the X value is going to be greater than 255 you must POKE the register with (X value — 255) and set the relevant 'bit' in register 16 (bit 1 for sprite 0 and so on).

Your best bet is to get hold of a book like Rae West's 'Programming the CBM 64' which can go into much more detail of how to do all these things than I could hope to cram into these two pages.

Tommy's Tips

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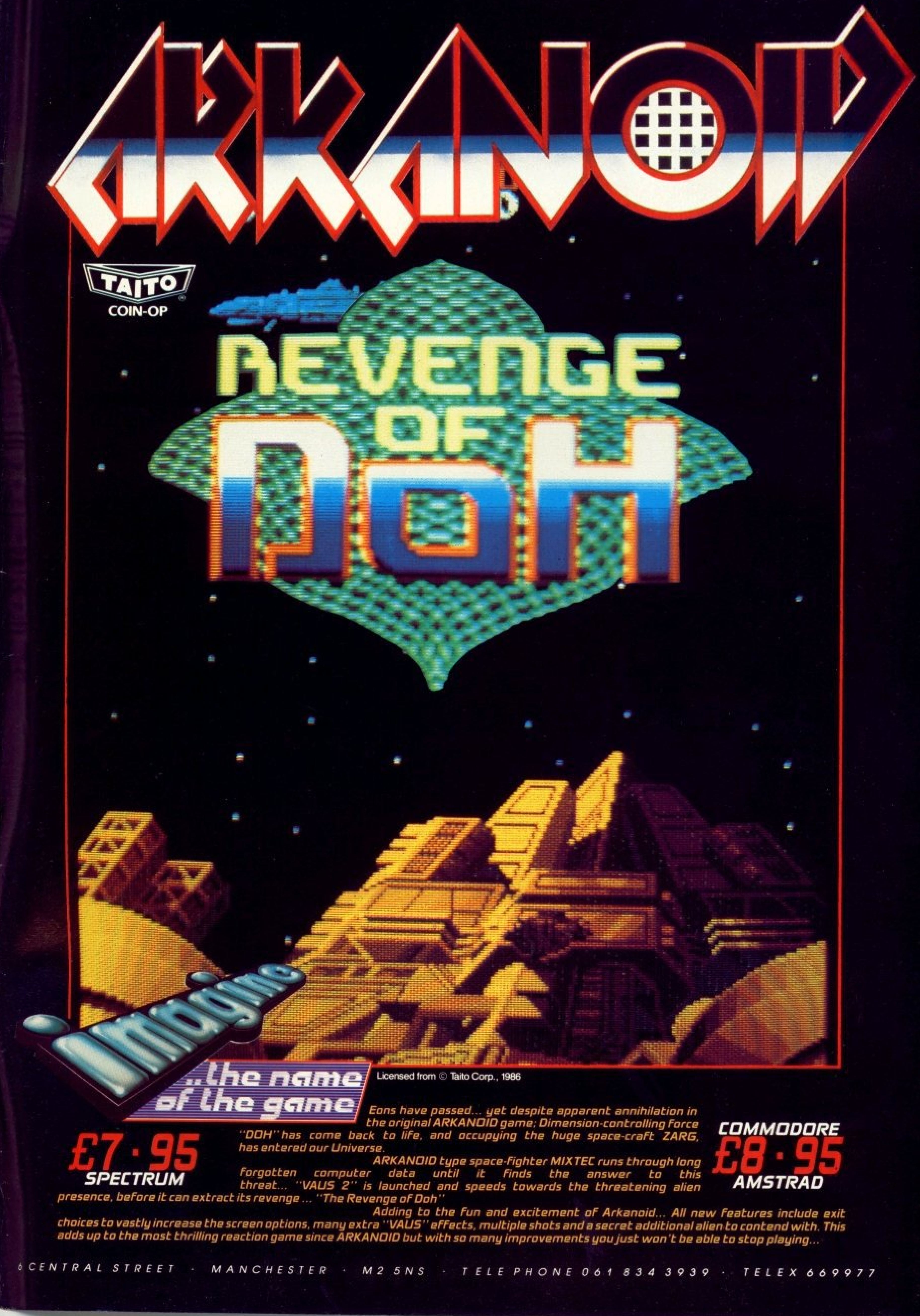
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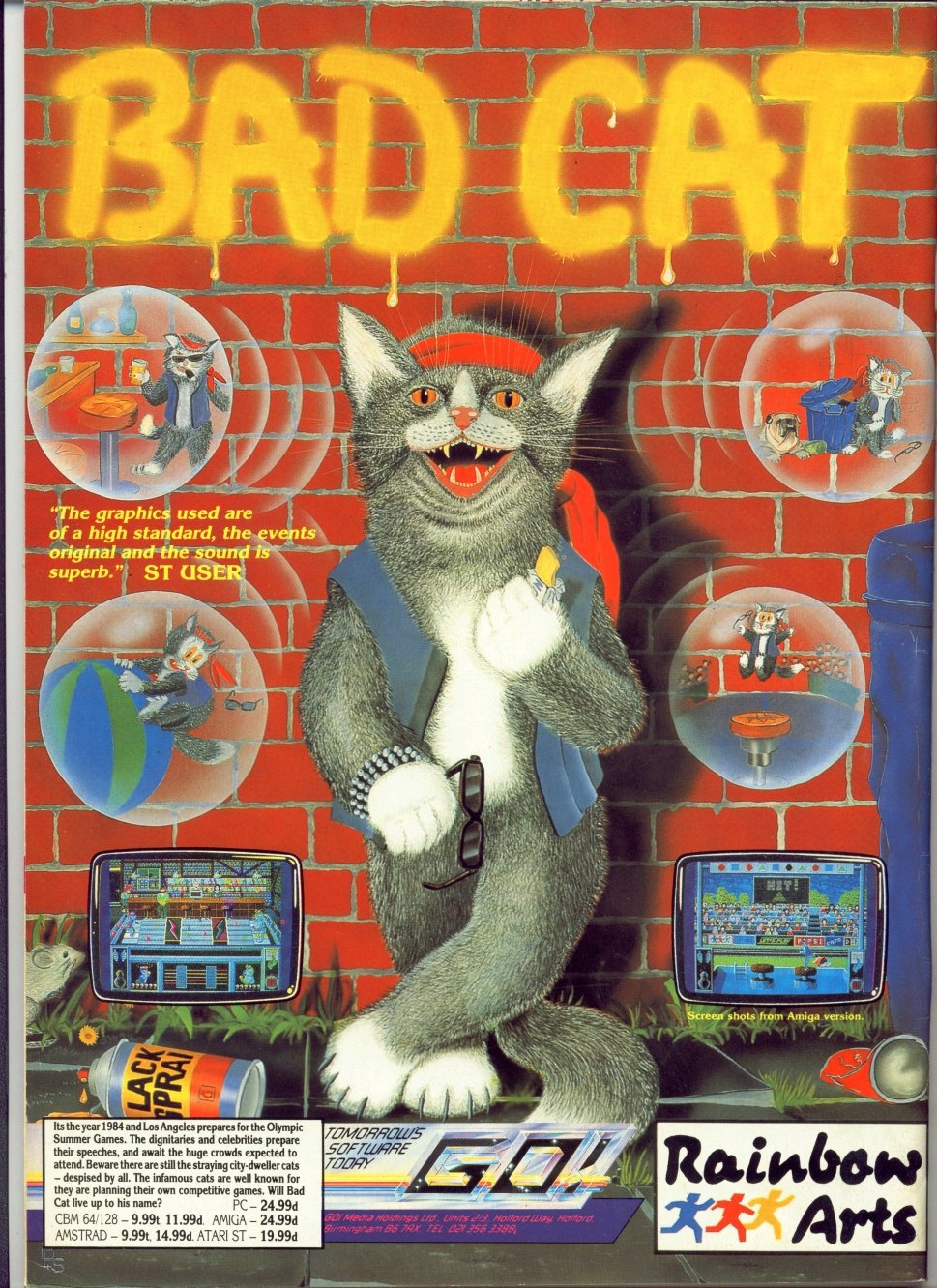
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